

EXHIBIT 4

Claim No. QB-2020-002450

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS LIST

B E T W E E N:-

MR WALTER TZVI SORIANO

Claimant

-and-

- (1) FORENSIC NEWS LLC
- (2) MR SCOTT STEDMAN
- (3) MR ERIC LEVAI
- (4) MR JESS COLEMAN
- (5) MR ROBERT DENAULT
- (6) MR RICHARD SILVERSTEIN

Defendants

APPENDIX ONE
SCHEDULE OF PUBLICATIONS

The words complained of for each publication are set out in italics, along with a description of insets of any photographs, graphs or objects embedded in the publications. The date of first publication and the URL at which the publication was and is published is set out before the words complained of.

Text removed from a publication after the date of first publication is denoted with double underlining and text added is denoted with single underlining.

1. PUBLICATION 1

Date of first publication: 5 June 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/06/05/british-security-consultant-under-scrutiny-in-russia-probe-incorporated-florida-llc-in-july-2016/>

FORENSIC NEWS EXCLUSIVE

British security consultant under scrutiny in Russia probe incorporated Florida LLC in July 2016

June 5, 2019 4:15 pm

By Scott Stedman

The business partner of a British security consultant who has come under scrutiny by the Senate Intelligence Committee for his connections to Psy Group and Oleg Deripaska, incorporated a Florida LLC in July 2016, Forensic News can reveal. The security consultant, Walter Tzvi Soriano, entered into business with a former Israeli defense contractor Guy Levitin and another Israeli man, Doron Cohen on July 22, 2016, the same day that WikiLeaks leaked the first DNC emails stolen by Russian intelligence.

The Florida LLC, Playland Investments, of which Cohen and Soriano are partners, appears to be active and involved in real estate in the United States. The third partner involved in the venture, Guy Levintin, is a Florida-based real estate investor catering to Israeli clients.

[Inset: partial screenshot of Articles of Organization setting out name and addresses of Guy Levintin, Doron Cohen, and the Claimant]

A cursory search of real estate records reveals that Playland Investments owns a number of properties in Florida and New Jersey.

[Inset: list of eight properties owned by Playland Investments]

Property records Cohen's listed address in the UK shows that he paid just under \$500,000 in 2013.

[Inset: partial screenshot of HM Land Registry record of property registered to Doron Cohen and Sarah Cohen]

Doron Cohen shares the name of the CEO of Fifth Dimension, a big data company based in Israel, which has received millions of dollars from Russian oligarch Viktor Vekselberg via his company Columbus Nova. Vekselberg and Columbus Nova previously came under scrutiny by Robert Mueller's investigators for their contributions to the Trump inauguration and their discussions and consulting deal with Michael Cohen. It is unclear if the Cohen that partnered with Soriano and Levintin is the CEO of Fifth Dimension, though Soriano is well known for his connections to the Israeli elite.

This new-found connection between Deripaska, Psy Group and Soriano is sure to intrigue investigators who are still probing Psy Group's involvement with the Trump campaign. In August of 2016, the CEO of Psy Group met secretly in Trump Tower with Donald Trump Jr, Erik Prince, and George Nader to pitch his social media services in an effort to aid Trump. After the election, Nader paid the CEO Joel Zamel a sum of \$2,000,000. The purpose of the payment remains unclear.

Soriano, appears to be involved with at least a dozen LLC in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. A Congressional source told Forensic News that there is interest in the money flow into Soriano's businesses. Soriano's background as a shadowy intelligence collector/analyst appears to also have connections to the Israeli government and Prime Minister Netanyahu. A 2018 Israeli news exposé revealed that Soriano, nicknamed "The Thug" has been a confidant of Netanyahu's for decades and has acted as somewhat of a fixer for the Israeli leader. Doron Cohen, Walter Soriano and others could not immediately be reached for comment. This story will be updated as more is learned.

2. PUBLICATION 2

Date of first publication: 14 July 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/07/14/walter-soriano-the-covert-operative-for-russian-and-israeli-elite/>

[Inset: two photographs of the Claimant]

The first images ever published of the mysterious Walter Soriano.

A source provided these exclusively to Forensic News.

Walter Soriano: The covert operative for Russian and Israeli elite

July 14, 2019 10:56am

By Scott Stedman and Jess Coleman

In late 2013, Oleg Deripaska's Basel Aero (part of his network of entities under the Basic Element parent company) was looking for ways to ensure that the Sochi airport would be kept safe during President Putin's prized Olympic Games. In a previously unreported episode, the joint Deripaska-Sberbank LLC that controls the Sochi International Airport turned not to Russian security experts, but rather to a UK-Israeli man with ties to the Netanyahu government and who has recently come under scrutiny by the Senate Intelligence Committee – Walter Soriano.

A small-claims court dispute in Krasnador, Russia revealed the details about Soriano's work for the Sochi Olympics. If it were not for this dispute – over 800,000 rubles or approximately \$12,500 for an Israeli operating without a work permit – these details about Soriano's work for Russia may have never seen the light of day.

*Buried within details about the companies involved and Russian case law were four paragraphs about the work that Soriano's USG Security Limited did for the Deripaska-Sberbank LLC. "The first stage: from 12/23/2013 to 02/02/2014," the court wrote, citing a contract signed by the Russian LLC and Soriano's USG Security, "a study of the existing situation, training of personnel of the aviation security service and airport security technology. Stage two from 02/03/2014 to 03/18/2014 **direct control at the facility and consulting assistance during the preparation and holding of the Olympic Games.**"*

Thus it appears, based on the contract cited in official Russian court filings, that Soriano's USG Security had "direct control" of the Sochi International Airport during Putin's crown jewel – the Olympic Games. The entire relevant section of the court filing is translated below:

[P]ersonnel training services were carried out under a consulting services agreement dated December 26, 2013, concluded by the company [Sochi International Airport] and USG Security Ltd (hereinafter referred to as the company).

From the content of the contract dated December 26, 2013 it follows that in accordance with clause 3.4 of the contract services will be provided in two stages. The first stage: from 12/23/2013 to 02/02/2014 – a study of the existing situation, training of personnel of the aviation security service and airport security technology. Stage two from 02/03/2014 to 03/18/2014 direct control at the facility and consulting assistance during the preparation and holding of the Olympic Games.

In clause 3.9 of the contract, the airport is required to provide the company with all the necessary data in written, oral and other form, to provide employees of the company with access to the premises and equipment, to receive for the company, its employees and representatives all necessary permits and other documentation (including visas, permits to work), provide them with housing and transportation.

Clause 12 of Appendix No. 2 to the contract dated December 26, 2013 stipulates that the airport should ensure the receipt of work permits and / or equivalent permits in order to create safe and legally stipulated work conditions for the USG work group.

Forensic News spoke with a number of Russia experts who expressed surprise that Soriano and USG Security were put in charge of such an important task for Russia.

“This is a quite an unusual situation with a foreigner like Soriano in Sochi,” Ilya Zaslavskiy, head of **Underminers.info**, a research project on post-Soviet kleptocracy in the West, told Forensic News. “It suggests that Soriano and his firm possessed some knowledge and/ or technology to survey other foreigners and/ or Russians that the Russian state could not get otherwise.”

“It also suggests very close links of Soriano with the Russian state and Deripaska as they don’t let random people in such sensitive spheres,” Zaslavskiy said.

Anders Aslund, a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council and author of Russia’s Crony Capitalism: The Path from Market Economy to Kleptocracy, told Forensic News that there was a massive payoff to those close to Putin surrounding the Sochi Olympics. He also suggested that Soriano may have had the Kremlin’s blessing, given the importance of the Olympics.

“Opposition analysts Boris Nemtsov and Leonid Martyniuk found that \$25 billion was overpaid to friends or cronies of President Vladimir Putin. Deripaska belongs to this circle. That someone is entitled to be a major security contractor in this circle suggests very close contacts to the Kremlin and Russian security services.”

Nemtsov was assassinated in 2015, with Western leaders largely blaming Putin's government. His body was found riddled with bullets just steps from the Kremlin. Five Chechens were convicted of his murder.

Mitchell Orenstein, Professor of Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, saw a potentially legitimate reason for Soriano's USG Security being hired for Sochi: "On the one hand, it looks pretty straightforward. Soriano has a security company. He is hired to provide aviation security for the Sochi Olympics. Perhaps they wanted to hire a Western firm because they were likely to achieve the security goal without angering all the international clientele."

However Orenstein concluded with the same overarching opinion as Zaslavskiy and Aslund: Soriano must have a close relationship with Deripaska and the Russian state: "Of course, it is well known that the Sochi contracts all went to friends, who often asked for kickbacks. So, at the very least, it does show a business relationship of some closeness to Deripaska and Sberbank."

A friend of Professor Orenstein's who has worked in Russia and who spoke to Forensic News on the condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the topic, raised serious concerns about Soriano's involvement in Sochi.

"Generally speaking, airport security during the Olympics is an extremely sensitive issue, in particular, since Russia is always under the threat of terrorist attacks that grew exponentially before the games. So, it sounds like the Kremlin very much trusted USG Security."

The person also expressed concerns about possible kickbacks, similar to the concerns of Aslund and Orenstein, to consultants during the Olympics, saying, "'consulting' is a standard way to hide kickbacks and other corrupt payments."

Senate interest

In April 2019, as previously reported by Politico, the Senate Intelligence Committee sent a letter to Soriano's USG Security office in London, requesting an interview and documents relating to any communications with various figures associated with their investigation. Now, for the first time, the entire list of persons/entities can be revealed. They are:

- *Oleg Deripaska*
- *Victor Boyarkin*
- *Georgy Oganov*
- *Konstantin Kilimnik*
- *Paul Manafort*

- *Erik Prince*
- *Darren Blanton*
- *Michael Flynn*
- *Steve Bannon*
- *David Bossie*
- *Psy Group aka Invop Ltd aka IOCO ltd (Joel Zamel + Royi Burstein)*
- *Wikistrat*
- *Black Cube*
- *George Birnbaum*
- *Aron Shaviv*
- *Orbis Business Intelligence (Christopher Steele + Christopher Burrows)*

A source familiar with the Senate Intelligence probe wouldn't comment on most of those involved and/or how they might relate to Soriano, with the obvious exception of Oleg Deripaska. The Committee also did not comment when asked if Soriano had complied with the request.

With regards to George Birnbaum, the source said, the Committee is interested in a pair of Washington, DC companies incorporated in January 2016, weeks before Birnbaum pitched the Trump campaign on Psy Group.

The two companies, JRP LLC and Questia Opinions LLC, were dissolved in April 2017. Records show that the address listed for both entities, 228 S Washington St Ste 115, is shared with numerous PACs, including some headed by David Bossie, who was on the list sent by the Senate Intelligence Committee.

[Inset: partial screenshots of records of companies]

In an email to Forensic News, Birnbaum expressed surprise that he would be included in the Soriano inquiry: "to my recollection I have never met, corresponded or had any contact with anyone by that name in my life. I have no idea why my name would be included in the request."

Rachel Cohen, a spokesman for the Senate Intelligence Committee, said that the Committee does not comment on witness engagements.

Other Russian clients

Soriano's USG Security had other high-profile Russian clients apart from Deripaska. According to a sworn affidavit in Israeli court by journalist Raviv Drucker (whom Soriano is suing for libel), USG Security has also worked for Roman Abramovich and Dmitry Rybolovlev. This was first reported in English by Seth Hettena.

Drucker has a storied history of investigative journalism that has resulted in police investigations and awards, including a 2008 OMETZ award (Citizens for Good Governance and Social Justice) and a 2012 Transparency International award. Recently, Drucker's reporting led to Israeli police opening an investigation into potential bribery of the Netanyahu family by an Australian billionaire.

Abramovich and his ex-wife Dasha Zhukova were once very close to Jared and Ivanka Kushner. Rybolovlev purchased a Florida mansion from Donald Trump in 2008 for \$95,000,000, a sharp increase from the \$40,000,000 Trump had spent on the property just three years prior. Rybolovlev never lived in the house.

From the Israeli journalist Drucker's affidavit (translated):

USG's clients were many and varied, including well-known capitalists, such as Mr. Roman Abramovich in his legal dispute against Mr. Boris Berezovsky...Dmitry Rybolovlev in the course of the legal dispute he waged against the art collector Yves Bouvier.

The Rybolovlev connection is further affirmed by a French journalist Marc LePlongeon who obtained correspondences between Soriano and Rybolovlev's attorney Tetiana Bersheda (both were convicted charged in 2018 in Monaco in a corruption probe).

According to documents obtained by LePlongeon, Rybolovlev hired Soriano in mid 2016 to investigate a former coach and player of his soccer club, AS Monaco. Soriano had a company called Football Universe Limited from 2008-2011, and alongside footballer Claudio Canniga, who was one of the two other directors in the company. In 2010, man named Walter Soriano spoke on behalf of soccer star Diego Maradona, though it is unclear if it is the same Soriano. Maradona's lawyer, Timothy Drukker, was the third director of the company.

As Drucker stated in court,

Some of the services offered by the USG were sometimes carried out using sub-contractors and through operations such as sophisticated tracking, data collection and data acquisition through various technological means, such as hacking, eavesdropping, and more.

The newly revealed Russian contacts and Senate Intelligence list for Soriano adds to a growing mystery about his connections with power brokers all around the world.

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Ties to Netanyahu

Soriano's ties to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu run deep and appear to only have been severed after Soriano was publicly named in 2017.

Israeli investigative journalist Ravi Drucker, in the course of his investigation, was able to obtain email correspondences between Soriano and Ari Harow, then Prime Minister Netanyahu's Bureau Chief. In the messages, Harow and Soriano discuss the scheduling of an upcoming Soriano-Netanyahu meeting.

[Inset: screenshot of email]

In 2017, Israeli authorities, who are investigating Netanyahu for various crimes, recommended indicting Harow for bribery, breach of trust, fraud and money laundering. Months later, Harow signed a plea deal with the authorities and turned on Netanyahu. Harow was subsequently convicted of only fraud and breach of trust.

After the police commissioner in Israel stated that private investigators collected information on the police forces investigating Netanyahu, Israeli media named Soriano as the culprit.

The reporting about Soriano in 2018 led to Netanyahu himself posting a Facebook status saying in part, "I haven't met or talked to Soriano in eight years."

בנימין נתניהו - Benjamin Netanyahu

about 2 years ago

הערכ בפינט הפיק ניז היומי:

אני לא מכיר את העתירה שהוגשה בעניין המלצות ואין לי שום קשר אליה. מילא כולכם כבר מבינם 1.

מה ערכן של המלצות, שהודלפו כבר לפני שנה ומא שודרו וmothoro בתקשורת אינספור פעמים.

בימה לאחרונה פורסמו בתקשורת רמיונות הוויות כאלו הפעלי אדם בשם וולטר סורייאנו, שהוגדר 2.

מ"קורבי", למשך אחרי חוקרי משטרת. מה לעשות שלא נפגשתי או דיברתי עם סורייאנו כבר שモונה שנים

... See More

Soriano's connections to Netanyahu don't end with Harow. Isaac Molho, a close confidant of Netanyahu's, had a share in Soriano's aforementioned Universe Security Group, according to business documents.

[Inset: three images of sections of a Letter of Intent between the Claimant and Guy Naggar and signed by Isaac Molho.]

Another document, first published by Drucker, shows that Molho received almost \$200,000 in finder's fees for a contract Molho facilitated with the Mexican company Altos Hornos de Mexico (AHMSA). AHMSA is the largest integrated steel plant in Mexico. It is unclear what kind of work Universe Security Group did for the company.

Molho himself was wrapped up in the Netanyahu corruption scandal and was interviewed by police five times, but has thus far escaped charges. Molho has represented Netanyahu since 1996 in various political, legal, and personal matters.

Molho is married to Netanyahu's cousin, and according to a Haaretz profile his "tendency to be discreet and avoid the press is said to be one of the qualities the prime minister appreciates most in him."

In explosive testimony in July 2019, a former subcontractor of Soriano's who was hired to provide security at the AHMSA testified that Soriano claimed that Netanyahu was a "partner" in Universe Security Group. "Because of this relationship with Netanyahu," Soriano allegedly told the subcontractor in 2006, "his door is open to me."

I remember that I expressed surprise that a senior elected public official is allegedly his partner in a financial project (Univsere Security Group). But Soriano reiterated, perhaps to impress me – Mr. Netanyahu is a partner in the venture.

The testimony continued, "Mr Soriano said – in the clearest terms- that he orchestrated a meeting between AA [Alonso Ancira, the Chairman/controlling owner of AHMSA] and Netanyahu when Netanyahu was still the Finance Minister (about a year before)."

Both Soriano and Netanyahu, who was the opposition leader of the Likud party at the time of the AHMSA project, vigorously deny the claims that they were ever business partners.

Ehud Barak, the former Prime Minister of Israel, tweeted about the claim that Soriano and Netanyahu were business partners, but Soriano's attorney immediately threatened a lawsuit. Barak later deleted the tweet but did not apologize.

What cannot be denied, however, is that Netanyahu's longtime confidant Isaac Molho received at least hundreds of thousands of dollars from Soriano's business.

In a groundbreaking 2010 report in Israeli media and picked up by US outlets such as the New York Times and Politico, a partially handwritten list of potential Netanyahu donors was leaked. From Politico, the document was "a list, marked up with now-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's handwriting, of prospective donors to his 2007 campaign — a remarkable leak..."

"The 1s indicate those whom Bibi thought likeliest to give, 2s a bit less likely, and so on. The top of the list includes big Republican donors Sheldon Adelson and Ron Lander; Rupert Murdoch is marked a 2."

As Forensic News pored over the list in preparation for this article, one name jumped out: Walter Soriano.

[Inset: photograph of typed and handwritten list, which includes the Claimant's name]

With a "1" by his name, Soriano was deemed very likely to be a big donor to the Netanyahu campaign. Charles Kushner, Jared's father, was also listed as a "1" along with Trump business partner Tamir Sapir and former RNC finance chair Steve Wynn. Donald Trump was listed as a "3."

In 2018, the Trump administration paid Molho's law firm \$150,000 the same month that the US Embassy was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The law firm stated that it advised the US Consulate on "matters concerning mostly planning and building of the diplomatic compounds in Jerusalem and Israeli labor law for some 20 years."

Both the Trump administration and the Netanyahu administration deny that the payment had anything to do with the move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Walter Soriano's web of connections

[Inset: map]

Map: Scott Stedman Source: Forensic News Embed Created with Datawrapper

UK business ventures

In the UK, Soriano has been active in the real estate market for years. Currently, Soriano is the director of seven active companies in the UK, four of which are devoted to real estate. Three of those real estate companies have combined assets of around \$12 million, but also have debts just under that amount (the fourth company is yet to file public accounting records). Records also indicate that a dissolved company controlled by Soriano took out mortgages on two properties from OneSavings Bank totaling around \$1.2 million.

Soriano's largest active real estate company, WS London Management, appears to have once been active in leasing and selling real estate. The company's website, which is no longer active, listed seven properties as part of its portfolio as recently as 2014, according to an Internet archive. One of those properties was sold in 2015 to a Panama shell company, for £1.55 million. There seems to be no active website for WS London Management, and the company could not be reached for comment.

Overall, Soriano has been involved in 12 British companies since 1981. The long list displays some bizarre patterns. For example, Soriano registered companies under the names Tov 7, Tov 77, and Tov 777 ("tov" is Hebrew for "good"). Soriano also registered Cross Roads Properties and Cross Roads Properties 2. Nearly all of Soriano's registered companies list the same London address.

Two of Soriano's active British companies list Orly Weinberger as a current or former co-director. Weinberger, a former lawyer, is also the director of a London-based property investment firm. In two other ventures, Soriano partnered with Simon Bird, a 76 year-old English historian. Bird and his partner, Winston Churchill's great-granddaughter in-law, sold their Dorset mansion in 2014 to the Lord Mayor of London for £3 million. Soriano also partnered with the lawyer Shlomo Rechtschaffen, the Executive Director of British Friends of Bar-Ilan University (BFBIU), a non-profit devoted to promoting the Israeli university in the UK. He once appeared with Haim Tomer, an ex-Mossad official, at a 2017 event hosted by BFBIU.

[Inset: photograph of individuals.]

Far left: Ex-Mossad top official Haim Tomer.

Second from right: Israeli Ambassador Mark Regev

Far right: Shlomo Rechtschaffen

Source: Times of Israel

Ms. Weinberger declined to comment for this article; Mr. Bird could not be reached.

US investments and activities

In July 2016, Soriano expanded his real estate activities into the U.S., creating Playland Investments, a Limited Liability Company registered in Florida. As previously reported by Forensic News, the company's articles of organization lists as members Guy Levintin, a former Israeli defense contractor who currently runs a Florida real estate investment firm, and Doron Cohen, whose identity could not be verified.

The company remains active, filing its latest annual report in April 2019. Shortly after its creation, Playland began purchasing properties across Broward County, according to public records. Overall, at least seven properties were purchased in Playland's name, ranging in price from around \$150,000 to nearly \$500,000. The transactions were with both private individuals and at least one LLC.

[Inset: three photographs of the exteriors of three properties.]

The properties are generally small, unimposing single-family homes, scattered throughout the Fort Lauderdale area. Playland has since sold two of its properties, public records show. In the first sale, two properties purchased by Playland in late-2016 and early-2017 for a combined \$515,000 were sold in June 2019 for \$750,000. The buyer in that sale was another Florida entity, 182 Ocean Avenue LLC, which was registered two months before the sale and has been involved in no other real estate transactions in Broward county.

In order to finance the sale, 182 Ocean Avenue took out a mortgage for around \$300,000. The property sold to 182 Ocean Avenue was previously leased to at least two tenants by Playland, according to court records. The tenants signed leases with Playland for monthly rents of around \$1,000, but were both evicted in 2017. In the other sale, Playland sold for \$285,000 a portion of a property it had bought a year earlier for \$445,000. That sale was also financed by a mortgage. Public records do not show any other sales.

Mr. Levintin, Playland Investment's authorized agent, did not respond to multiple requests for comment for this article.

According to the Israeli newspaper Globes, Soriano's covert operations once included collecting information in the United States. "Soriano was hired by billionaire Ruth Parasol to collect and analyze intelligence information about a criminal investigation against her in the United States," the paper reported.

Parasol's company, PartyGaming, operated a series of online gambling websites around the world. In a 2009 non-prosecution agreement with SDNY, PartyGaming executives, including Parasol avoided jail time for their illegal gambling websites in exchange for a \$105,000,000 penalty.

Soriano's intelligence information for the Parasol-DeLeon couple is divided into two types: open information including legal documents, journalistic material, and the like; And "classified information" that includes online competitors' operating patterns. According to documents received by [Globes], Soriano himself wrote, through legal counsel, that the intelligence information he collected for the Persul-DeLeon couple included "human intelligence sources in the US, Europe, India and Israel, including field agents, poker players, Gamblers, journalists, lawyers, lobbyists, and government officials."

Universe Security Group

Soriano from 2002 to 2010 controlled Universe Security Group Limited, which appears to be a precursor to USG Security Limited. On the board of the company, along with Soriano, were individuals associated with intelligence agencies and the CEO of Universe Security Group's Spanish branch was arrested for a slew of financial crimes.

For the majority of its existence, Universe Security Group's board of directors was made up of Albert Raes, the former head of Belgium's Security Services, Nahum Admoni, the former Director-General of Mossad, and Uri Sagi, the former chief of Israel's Military Intelligence. This is the only UK company in which the three men have ever been directors, according to the UK's Companies House, the government's official registrar of companies.

In 2005, Universe Security Group expanded into Spain according to corporate documents.

[Inset: document setting out share details, capital and reserves of Universe Security Group]

Records from Spain show that Soriano tapped Luis Fernando Linares Torres to be the CEO of the company. Just a few years later, Torres was arrested in a massive anti-corruption sweep by Madrid authorities, dubbed Operation Astapa. Torres faced charges of influence peddling, bribery and money laundering and posted 500,000 euros bail. It's unclear how much, if any, jail time he served.

Universe Security Group folded in 2010 after one of its clients, Graff Diamonds, was the victim of the biggest jewelry heist in London history. Soriano's company was supposed to protect the jeweler according to news reports at the time. The final price tag? Graff Diamonds was out of \$28.9 million. "They knew exactly what they were looking for and we suspect they already had a market for the jewels," police said.

After Universe Security Group folded, Soriano was forced to rebrand. During liquidation, Soriano's company acknowledged that their contract with Graff Diamonds was abruptly terminated after the heist.

[Inset: screenshot of early termination clause of contract.]

The newfound connections between Walter Soriano and the power-centers of Israel and Russia are sure to intrigue investigators looking into foreign influence in the United States political, financial, and legal sectors.

Soriano, since the media began reporting on him in 2018, is suing at least five journalists, two media outlets, and one independent journalist for more than 1.7 million shekels or a little less than \$500,000.

Forensic News was indeed subject to a threat of a libel lawsuit before publishing this story by a lawyer claiming to represent Soriano. We will not delete this story under any circumstances.

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3. PUBLICATION 3

Date of first publication: 19 July 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/07/19/walter-soriano-once-claimed-to-be-ex-israeli-intelligence-officer/>

The Walter Soriano Files: The consultant once claimed to be ex-Israeli intelligence officer

July 19, 2019 1:57 pm

By Scott Stedman

Walter Soriano, the shadowy international consultant wanted for questioning by the Senate Intelligence Committee, told at least one high-profile client that he was previously a high ranking member of the Israeli Army's intelligence.

The contract signed between Soriano's British Virgin Islands LLC Westward Management and American Ruth Parasol wherein Parasol states that Soriano told her he was ex-Israeli intelligence is now available in full to our staff. Forensic News had previously mentioned the connection between Parasol and Soriano in a profile on the security consultant.

A treasure trove of Israeli court documents and internal USG Security Group files were recently shared by a source on the condition of anonymity to Forensic News given the highly sensitive nature of the information. The details in this article are just the beginning of a series we are going to dub the Walter Soriano files.

Ruth Parasol is an American billionaire who made her fortune through online pornography websites before selling those companies and founding a online gambling websites called PartyGaming in the late 1990s. By 2006, Parasol was named the 197th richest American on the annual Forbes list with a net worth of \$1.8 billion.

Soon after, Parasol ran into trouble after the United States passed the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006. The Southern District of New York began an investigation into PartyGaming to determine whether PartyGaming or any of its principals were breaking federal law. Prosecutors who worked on the case did not respond to requests for comment.

Documents, mainly court proceedings from 2012 when Soriano sued Parasol for not paying part of the Parasol-Soriano contract, offer extraordinary details about the activities of Soriano in the United States from 2008 to 2010.

Overall, Soriano was paid over \$30,000,000 but believed he was entitled to more. The two eventually settled their dispute out of court and the terms of the settlement are not known.

Prior to and possibly during the time with which Soriano and Parasol were acquainted, Hunter Biden signed a lobbying contract for Parasol. The contract caused a controversy when Hunter Biden's father Joe was tapped as then-candidate Obama's running mate. The younger Biden ended up dropping his lobbying clients. There is no indication that Biden ever had contact with Soriano.

Beginning in 2008, Soriano and Parasol were introduced to one another. Soriano pitched himself as an expert in "consulting, investigation, crisis management, and advisory services to...high net worth individuals." The contract was conducted via intermediaries (mainly Soriano's British Virgin Islands LLC Westward Management) "given the sensitivity of the DoJ investigation."

[Inset: partial screenshot of court document.]

View the six relevant pages from the sworn affidavit of Ruth Parasol:

[Inset: first six pages of Defence and Counterclaim in *Walter Soriano v Ruth Parasol Deleon* (2012 Folio 781)]

Soriano also claimed that he had "a significant network of contacts (personal, business and political)," in the United States. It was not immediately clear to which US political or business contacts Soriano had a relationship.

[Inset: image of notes to the abbreviated accounts of Universe Security Group Limited year ended 31 December 2008.]

Corporate document showing Walter Soriano's BVI LLC controlling Universe Security Group

Some of the statements made by Parasol under oath in 2012 can be verified. For example, it can be confirmed that Soriano had a British Virgin Islands (BVI) company called Westward Management. Documents filed in the UK for Soriano's Universe Security Group show that the company was majority owned by the BVI firm. The corporate documents also confirm Parasol's assertion that Westward Management was controlled by a trust fund for Soriano.

The Parasol affidavit also includes tantalizing claims that can partially be verified based on separate corporate documents first revealed by Forensic News. Parasol recounted a September 2008 meeting in which Soriano brought one of his references, who was described in the 2012 lawsuit as, "a person who had served and is serving at the highest levels of the Israeli government."

Parasol, who didn't name the senior Israeli government official present at the 2008 meeting, said that her decision to hire Soriano was based in part on the official's recommendation.

In recent days, a businessman who worked with Soriano around the same time as the Parasol contract, stated in court that Soriano told him that Benjamin Netanyahu himself was his business partner. Additionally, emails obtained by investigative journalist Raviv Drucker shows that Soriano was arranging a mid-September get-together with Netanyahu just days before the Parasol meeting.

[Inset: screenshot of email between the Claimant and Ari Harow.]

Walter Soriano's emails with Netanyahu aide Ari Harow

Though it cannot be confirmed that Netanyahu attended the meeting with Parasol and Soriano, circumstantial evidence points to either Netanyahu or a member of his inner circle being present. Soriano, knowing that this potential deal with Parasol would net him millions of dollars, would have likely wanted to impress Parasol in any way possible.

The fact that Soriano was planning a meeting with Netanyahu at the precise time he brought a "senior Israeli government official" to the meeting with Ruth Parasol will surely raise more questions in court as Soriano continues to sue multiple journalists and bloggers who have written about him. Attorneys for Soriano did not respond to requests for comment. Reached by email, Parasol referred Forensic News to her attorney Sean O'Shea who said that they have no comment.

Soriano has previously strongly denied that Netanyahu was ever his business partner.

Perhaps the most stunning claim in the Parasol lawsuit, however, is the claim that Soriano told the businesswoman that he was a major in Israeli intelligence.

"The claimant [Soriano] represented as follows..." Parasol swore, "He was a man of action and a former major in an elite intelligence unit in the Israeli army."

[Inset: screenshot of two sub-paragraphs of court document]

Though the assertion could not be verified, very little is known about Soriano's activities prior to his founding of Universe Security Group. The shadowy consultant, who incorporated the company in 2002 when he was 34, managed to have just one partially obscured image of himself in the public domain prior to Forensic News exclusively acquiring the photos seen in the featured image of this story.

Elsewhere in the court document, Parasol claims that Soriano told her that he had "killed people."

[Inset: screenshot of paragraph of court document.]

The total lack of information on Soriano prior to age 34 coupled with his alleged claim of being ex-Israeli intelligence, adds to the intrigue about the man who has recently landed in the crosshairs of the Senate Intelligence Committee's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 US elections.

The Senate wants to know more about Walter Soriano's connections to Russian oligarchs and Israeli private intelligence companies Psy Group and Black Cube. This newly revealed information sheds light on why Soriano is of interest to investigators.

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4. PUBLICATION 4

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***COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE PODCAST
WITH ERIC LEVAI***

***Counter Intelligence Podcast – Scott Stedman and Jess
Coleman on Walter Soriano***

July 22, 2019 1:56pm

By Scott Stedman and Eric Levai

[Inset: SoundCloud podcast player and photograph of the Claimant. The podcast played is an audio file named CI Walter Soriano 1130 edition.mp3. The Claimant will rely on the transcript of Publication 4 set out at Publication 5 below as an accurate transcript of what is said (unless otherwise indicated) and published in the podcast, and shall be treated as being pleaded in full here. The Claimant will rely upon the full audio recording of the podcast at the trial of the action.]

5. PUBLICATION 5

Date first published: 22 July 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/07/22/counter-intelligence-podcast-transcription-scott-stedman-and-jess-coleman/>

Counter Intelligence Podcase – Scott Stedman and Jess Coleman on Walter Soriano

July 22, 2019 2:36pm

By Scott Stedman

CI Walter Soriano 1130 edition.mp3

[Inset: download icon. Selecting this icon leads to download options of (a) a PDF of the transcript or (b) download of CI Walter Soriano 1130 edition.mp3, which is the same podcast as at Publication 4 above, and transcribed below]

Transcript

[00:00:00] Eric Levai

Welcome to counterintelligence. This is Eric Levai.. Today, we're joined by Forensic News journalist Scott Stedman and Jess Coleman to discuss their explosive reporting on Walter Soriano. Forensic News thanks Our patrons on Zacharias "Z-Score" Kominsky. Angela J. Craig P. Gregg S Sasha M. and Jim R. Support forensic news and counter intelligence on Patreon Without further ado, here's the show.

[00:00:22] Eric Levai

Scott Stedman and Jess Coleman. Welcome to counterintelligence.

[00:00:26] Jess Coleman

How's it going, Eric? Great. Great.

[00:00:28] It's been quite a week. It's Friday, though, guys.

[00:00:36] Eric Levai

Guys, you have some exclusive reporting on Walter Soriano. So, Scott, I was warning if maybe you could start and really just tell us or tell the listener actually first, how did Walter Soriano come to your attention? And who is Walter Soriano?

[00:00:50] Scott Stedman

Yeah. So Walter Soriano came to my attention first by a report from Natasha Bertrand in Politico. She reported last early last month that the Senate was interested in him for their Russia probe, the Senate Intelligence Committee.

[00:01:07] Scott Stedman

And so soon after that, we started digging into him and basically found that he has all these connections to the power centers of Russia and Israel. He bills himself as sort of like this security consultant who, you know, can protect airports and ships and things like that and also provide, you know, intelligence on business opponents. So we started digging into him and we found connections to the very top of the Russian government and the Israeli government. And so are our report in mid-July last week as of this recording.

[00:01:51] Scott Stedman

We found that he was basically in charge of keeping the Sochi airport safe during the Olympics, which is obviously a huge deal for Russia. And it says a lot about, you know, his connections to the people in charge there. You know, we talked to various Russia experts and they all pretty much said that there was some sort of, you know, relationship and level of trust between the Russian government and Soriano for him to be put in charge of such an important task, because we know that the Olympics are a huge deal, especially to Putin, who wanted to put on a great show for the rest of the world.

[00:02:36] Eric Levai

Right. I was thinking about that myself when I read the article that really the you know, Putin, who is already a very paranoid guy, and I'm sure that would have been a major terrorism target. So despite whatever corruption that exists in Russia, they would never have given a job like that to somebody that they didn't trust to keep the airports safe. Would I be correct?

[00:02:56] Scott Stedman

Yeah, that's totally right. And they had terrorist attacks, you know, pretty soon before the Olympics and after. So they've been dealing with, you know, the terrorist threat like the rest of the world. They had a subway bombing. And so, yeah, this was very important to Putin to keep the main airport safe and in the city

where the Olympics were being held. And, you know, they turned to not to Russian security experts or the Russian military, but they turned to this Israeli private company controlled by Walter Soriano.

[00:03:37] **Eric Levai**

Exactly. And then your article also some of the experts you interviewed implied that I mean, I think one actually said that they thought that Soriano had access to some kind of technology that the Russian government didn't have. Could you tell us a little bit about that? You either one to.

[00:03:53] **Scott Stedman**

Yeah, I'll take that one. So basically, the contract that was signed between Soriano is U.S. G security and the Sochi airport. It basic basically gave Soriano complete access to everything. It says in the contract that they have direct control at the facility during the Olympics. And it's it stipulates that the airport is going to give Soriano and his employees pretty much access to everything.

[00:04:27] **Scott Stedman**

You know, like the security security room, the cameras, the you know, the the efforts to interview suspicious people.

[00:04:38] **Scott Stedman**

So they were in charge of everything. And it says a lot that they turned to him instead of Russians, like I said before, because, you know, as one of our Russian experts that we interviewed said indicates that Soriano had, if not the technology, the expertise and the trust that the Russian government was.

[00:05:00] **Eric Levai**

And then from a reporter's process, just maybe giving people an inner workings of how it works. How did Jess how did you like how did you guys decide to collaborate on this one? Scott had started working on it.

[00:05:12] **Jess Coleman**

It was I I got involved when we started looking at the various real estate and other business ventures that Soriano was involved with in the United Kingdom and the United States. So once Scott had this scoop on the Sochi airport, I began looking into some of the properties that he was investing in with some other individuals in the United States and the United Kingdom. And it sort of sprouted off from there. There are infinite scoops in this article and they sort of just kept coming at us like wildfire. Yeah.

[00:05:45] **Eric Levai**

So there are about five or I mean, like this was like it was like a blockbuster. Like it could have been probably, I'm sure, a few articles, but but it's in one big one. So there's five or six major scoops. So maybe Scott, maybe you could start to take us through a few and then we'll go to just buy what you know, maybe start with you. Yeah.

[00:06:04] Scott Stedman

So we we talked about the Sochi airport. That's what we'd led with. That's probably the I don't know. I don't want to rank the scoops, but that's like that. But it's one of the most important ones. Do the BuzzFeed, Scott? No. Yeah. Top top 15 pictures of Walter Soriano. So. So we had the Sochi airport. Right. And that establishes his connections to the Russian government and to Putin. We also got the full letter that the Senate Intel Committee sent to Soriano. And we printed every name and entity that was on the list of people that they thought that Soriano had some contacts with during the 2015 and 2016 election cycle. So we printed that whole list. Some of the interesting names we have. Erik Prince is on there, Mike Flynn, Paul Manafort, all of Oleg Deripaska. Well, his inner circle. And then we also have the you know, the Israeli private Intelligence. company is Sy Group and Black Cube. So those within the entities that stuck out to us, we printed the full list on the article. Yeah. And then the real estate. Which Jess pretty much handled most of that. And there's a few scoops in there. Yeah.

[00:07:22] Eric Levai

Yeah. Jess tell us about the real estate specifically. Mr. Soriano is buying up a lot of kind of an unusual property in Florida. Could you maybe tell us about the. Yeah.

[00:07:35] Jess Coleman

So there are sort of two threads here in the United States. He created this LLC called Playland Investments in July 2016, which is an interesting time for this to begin and started buying up properties sort of scattered around Broward County. And it's it's not really clear why he's doing this. We can only speculate as to why it's not clear exactly who the figures are that he's involved with doing this with. He's rented out some of these properties. Some of them have been sold to other entities who whose identities we couldn't really verify much. So there's a lot of sort of speculation and just a nebulous nature around that company. There's not much we really know about it. And the United Kingdom, he's been involved in the real estate industry for upwards of like 30 years. And he's got what really stuck stood out to me is just how many companies he has. I mean, in one instance, he created these three different companies called Top Seven, Top Seven, Seven and Toque 777. Tove is the Hebrew word for good. And he he partnered with the same woman named Orly Weinberger in all of those three ventures. And, you know, we've been trying to figure out what properties exactly he's been investing in, which is more difficult in the United Kingdom. We've found that in the United States. But basically these. This has just raised a lot of suspicion. And we don't really know the

purpose of these companies. We don't really know the extent of the business they're doing. And it just really raises more questions than answers.

[00:09:09] Eric Levai

I think also just speaking as a Jewish American, are we going to drop in an exclusive articles on the articles on how an Orthodox Jew is named Soriano?

[00:09:19] Eric Levai

Let's go. Are you guys going to look into that? Because I've heard that that one I haven't figured out how I actually.

[00:09:24] Scott Stedman

Yeah. No, actually, I've answered that he was he was actually born in Argentina. So. So he's a a UK Argentinean Israeli Jew. OK.

[00:09:37] Eric Levai

Yeah. But no. Here you go. You said, yeah. I guess we won't be posing that on forensic News. You just said it. Yeah. I wanna go back to that real estate for a second. Just like either abroad or here. I mean, I you know, just playing the devil's advocate. Obviously, real estate is especially now is probably a pretty good investment. And we know people do that. Is there a. B, the is just putting his money in places that that would make him money.

[00:10:03] Jess Coleman

It could be, you know. And I know this is what follows is all speculation. And I'm not a, you know, an expert on financial crimes or anything. But, you know, the purpose in, for example, a money laundering scheme would be if you're gonna use real estate, would be that you want to get it into the system and make it so that it's the the money is not detectable. Right. We don't know where it's coming from. So it's only going to raise suspicion. That's the whole point. So we can't exactly verify where it is coming from. Of course, you know, you would want. You could. There are many companies out there that like Soriano, companies are very much in debt, you know, own a lot of real estate, are involved with different figures. But what I think creates skepticism here is not only the individuals he's associating with, but the the fact that he has so many different companies doing exactly the same thing. The fact that they are all all seem to be leveraged in debt to a very high degree. And the fact that he is, you know, using these names that make them look like, you know, shell companies, it just raises a lot of skepticism. And no, we can't say I want to be clear. We can't say at all that we know where this money is coming from or why it's being invested in

the way it is. There are many legitimate explanations. But the nature and the way it's being done definitely raises a lot of questions.

[00:11:19] Eric Levai

Yeah. Yeah. Just curious, like typically with people who are, let's say, hypothetically hiding their money or they're using real estate to do that. Do they typically buy more high dollar properties? Because it seemed like he was buying like just kind of these regular old houses?

[00:11:35] Jess Coleman

Yeah. I mean, I work from what I understand that I've got I'm not an expert in their was that you could do it. You could do it in many different ways. I mean, you could buy high value properties and you and, you know, that would be a very good way to move a lot of money very quickly. You might pay in cash or you might want to finance it with a mortgage and pay off the mortgage very quickly. But you've also might want to buy low value properties and try to buy them for less than the value that they're actually worth or to to rent them out as we saw and derive clean income that way, as we did see they did on a very small scale. So there are so many possibilities. This is one of the reasons that using real estate is such a good idea, because there are you know, there are not many financial reporting requirements. You can move a lot of cash at a very fast pace. So we just don't know. And that's why, you know, we're continuing to look into this.

[00:12:25] Eric Levai

Yeah. And then breaking actually right before this show. Scott, we have some some new reporting on Mr. Soriano. Maybe you could take us through what we're going to be dropping on forensic news very shortly.

[00:12:36] Scott Stedman

Yeah. So we got a bunch of documents dumped in our laps, pretty much from a source that we know a lot of court documents. Soriano Soo's [sues] pretty much everyone that comes into contact with him. So there's there's a lot in black and white. And you know, that that could include forensic news here pretty soon. We've gotten we've gotten some threat letters.

[00:13:01] Eric Levai

Name is on the paperwork, which may be one of the. What I'm saying is, do they know who I am? That's what I'm saying now.

[00:13:10] Scott Stedman

No, no, no, no. It'll be me. So. Yes. So so this new article, it's basically a court document. And with a woman named Ruth Parasol, who is an American born billionaire. She actually started an online. Well, she started in porn. She ran a bunch of porn sites and amassed a small fortune that way. But then she quickly turned in to online gambling. She started one of the most popular online gambling Web sites of all time. And she actually became a billionaire because of this. And in 2006, the U.S. government passed a new law pretty much banning online gambling to a large extent. And so Parasol's company came under scrutiny and pretty quickly. And so basically, she turned to Walter Soriano to do a whole host of things, one, to keep her from going to jail and to collect intelligence on her rivals, on her business rivals. She ended up paying Soriano over 30 million dollars, which is a huge sum of money. And in this court filing, where Soriano basically says he's owed more money, owed more than the 30 million he already got, Parasol swears in an affidavit that Soriano told her that he was ex Israeli intelligence..

[00:14:49] **Scott Stedman**

He was in Israeli intelligence, major in the Israeli army. And she makes this claim under oath. It's a sworn affidavit and it just adds to the intrigue around Soriano. Right. We don't know who this man is. There's only a few a few clients that we've been able to unearth with US companies. And an important point that we make in the article is that we have no idea what he did prior to age 34 when he first started this USG company. So this claim of him being an Israeli intelligence officer is certainly going to, you know, sort of raise the hair on the back of the neck of investigators in the Senate and federal investigators elsewhere that are looking into Soriano. So so this claim is in black and white and it was under oath. So it said something we're taking seriously and it adds to the intrigue of this sort of shadowy consultant that we don't know a lot about.

[00:16:02] **Eric Levai**

Right. I mean, well, obviously, we'd like to say we can't say for sure. And I mean, I barely remember what I did before I was 34. But, you know, that said, if he really does seem to fit. I mean, it's not certainly not an unreasonable thing. I mean, and also just as connections, which as you have pointed out, both of you go to the highest levels, the highest levels of the Israeli government.

[00:16:25] **Scott Stedman**

Right. And then this new article, we also spend a lot of time focusing on that Parasol also said in her affidavit in this court, Israeli court document that she had an initial meeting with Mr. Soriano, Walter Soriano, in 2008 when she was first introduced to him to try and navigate this DOJ investigation into her online gambling Web site. And they met in Gibraltar. And she says that Soriano brought along one of his references, who she described in the lawsuit as, quote, a person who had served and is serving at the highest levels of the Israeli government. So **27**

we also have all these claims that we've written about, about Soriano knowing Benjamin Netanyahu. And in this new article, we put together kind of a timeline of, you know, we have these e-mails from Soriano to one of Netanyahu's closest aides in late August of 2008 trying to set up a meeting with Netanyahu in mid September of 2008, which is precisely when he met Parasol for the first time. And when she says he brought along someone at the highest level of the Israeli government. So we have all these dots pretty much saying that Soriano is close to Netanyahu and we have all you know, at this point we have like 10 reference points of him being close to Netanyahu, which is just super, super interesting given his connections to the Russian government. And now, you know, now it goes to the top of the Israeli government. And this is just a web of connections that the Senate is certainly looking into. And I'd be surprised if the FBI wasn't looking into as well.

[00:18:16] Eric Levai

And to be clear, my name is Eric Smith.

[00:18:18] Eric Levai

Tony JONES Right.

[00:18:23] Eric Levai

I'm going to have you got to love it. So just just to put that again or maybe to some of what you just said. So Mr. Soriano was looking to prove himself to a very high dollar client and used it was which is common and used as a reference point or a reference somebody who was at the highest levels of the Israeli government. At the same time, he was trying to set up a meeting with Netanyahu. So it's very plausible that it was either either him or someone close to him reference, you know, referencing him. Is that correct?

[00:18:57] Scott Stedman

Exactly. It has to be. I mean, you look at all the data points. You have a sworn affidavit from from Paris all saying that, you know, a senior member of the Israeli government went to this meeting, meeting and vouched for Soriano, as you know, resonate. And what he could do for her and you have the e-mails, you have the you know, there's another business man who swore in court that Soriano told him that Netanyahu is his business partner back in 2008, and this was before he was prime minister. He was Netanyahu is the leader of the opposition party at this time. So it's not like the prime minister was flying around these places. He could have kept a little bit of a lower profile. But but certainly it looks like Soriano had some sort of relationship with Netanyahu. We don't know how deep that goes, but it's certainly interesting to see how connected this guy is to all these governments around the world.

[00:19:55] Eric Levai

Do either of you know? Because I'm not sure about this. I mean, everyone in Israel, you know, has to serve in the military, was did Netanyahu serve in Intelligence, or what's going on in his background?

[00:20:06] Scott Stedman

I have not looked into it, looked into that, but I'm sure he did. I know it's a requirement, so I'm not sure what branch he served in or anything like that. But he is he's a fair amount older than Soriano. So it's not like there would be in the same military class or anything. He's like 15, 15 or 17 years older than sorry.

[00:20:25] Eric Levai

That's right. Yeah. Jess. Can you. I was curious just on the perspective. Because I don't know how this works. How do how do you look through how does one start to look through property and records to find out these things that you discovered? How do you do that from the journalist perspective?

[00:20:41] Jess Coleman

We've been looking mostly at things that are all public in any state. It's pretty easy because you can you could search by who the owner is. You do have to go by county, which is a little annoying. But in Broward County, we were able to just search Playland Investments and get all the properties that they've been involved in, all the mortgages that they've taken out, all the people they've sold to. The UK is a little harder. They have a little more protections on what you can search. But we've been able to find some companies just by looking at the public charges, basically a mortgage that these companies have filed and they have to list the address of the property. But we're having some difficulty getting all the properties that they're involved in. But we'll get there.

[00:21:22] Eric Levai

Yeah. Speaking generally, just how how does a high dollar type of person. Because, you know, you're you're a lawyer. How do you if you want to create a these LLC or these things to mask yourself? I mean, how do you do that?

[00:21:39] Jess Coleman

It's it's really easy. It's it's it's a matter of by the way, I'm not a lawyer yet. I have to pass the bar exam. But but but he is he is so close. This young man, he just it's just a matter of filing some short articles of incorporation with the state, paying a filing fee. But pretty much anyone can get an LLC for any reason.

[00:21:58] Eric Levai

Ok. And then once you have the LLC, from what I'm looking into, you can, you know, have another LLC that buys that LLC. And it's like there's like a web, right? Is that correct? Either one? Correct. Yeah.

[00:22:10] **Scott Stedman**

Yeah, that's right.

[00:22:11] **Scott Stedman**

It's it's it's interesting with Soriano like these the Russians that I've studied for the past two years and all these, you know, shady money laundering people, they usually don't put their name to the LLC like they'll have a lawyer in the county do it. But it's interesting with Soriano, he put his name to all of these. But like just said, we were having trouble figuring out what all these LLC is do, especially in the UK. You know, like I said, you can't search by Buy LLC name to see what they own. So I think I mean, if you look at it, he has like 12 or 15 LLC and we've only been able to figure out I think one or two. Yeah. So there's a possibility. I mean the the one or two that we've actually been able to find properties associated with, they've been very high dollar. Most of them a million dollars plus. So there's a good possibility that Soriano owns tens of millions of dollars of real estate in the U.K. We just don't know yet. We're trying to chip away at it, and I think we'll get there eventually. But there's a good chance that he has a ton of money invested in the UK and we don't know whose money it is.

[00:23:28]

Right. And just to add to that, sorry to interrupt, but the the fact that his name is on his LLC is, like Scott said, sort of has tipped me off from the beginning because it it leads me to believe that these connections to these high, you know, these power brokers all around the world are up there, that there's more content to them than it would appear. Right. Because like Scott said, you usually want to have someone be your front person and put their name on the LLC. And it's it might be that Soriano is that front person. And he's not, you know, trying to do anything with his own assets, but it's someone else's assets. And which also, you know, makes all of this reporting that Scott's doing about U.S. job security. And, you know, they're shady, you know, where's their all their money coming from that it makes that all the more intriguing as well.

[00:24:13]

That's a great point, because if you if you look at Soriano profile, I explain it a little bit in this new article that's gone up soon. He didn't have a picture online for the entirety of his life until until we got a couple of them. And so if you look at, you know, his his partnership with Oleg Deripaska, his connections to Netanyahu, his his work for Paris, all this American billionaire is certainly looks like Jeff said, it looks like Soriano is the front man here. And

that's why he is so comfortable putting his name to it, because it might not be his money, which makes the Florida properties so interesting to me because it's. There's so low dollar and it's just so it's so unorthodox if you compare that to the business ventures in the UK and in the United States there there night and day. If you if you look at the UK properties, they're huge mansions of four or five, six thousand square feet. And if you look at the U.S., this company that has happened in July of 2016, they're like little. A hundred and fifty thousand dollar eight hundred square foot houses in very remote parts of Broward County. So it's it adds to the intrigue. And it I think it points to, like just said Soriano being the front man instead of him managing his own assets.

[00:25:39]

And I'd like to just really highlight, too, for everybody what you just said as well. One of the major scoops of the article, which because it was the first thing even I read the article and didn't realize it, a forensic news. Scott's them and discovered the first pictures of Walter Soriano, right?

[00:25:59]

Yeah, that's right. It was sent to us by a source, RU, who didn't want to be named, obviously. But we blurred out all the faces that he's with, like one of them is just him at dinner and one of them is him posing for a picture. I think it is his synagogue. Mm hmm. So we blurred out everyone else. But. But, you know, these these small images are the only ones on the Internet besides like this very distorted one that Israeli media had that didn't really show his face.

[00:26:28]

It's just really want to highlight it for us and for people who want to support us for what we're doing here. I mean, we're like five people who I mean, the first pictures of a guy who's currently who's connected to the highest levels of Russia and Israel and is wanted for questioning by the United States Senate, just that's the type of work we're doing over here. And I just think that's it's great to just highlight that totally.

[00:26:50]

Yeah. And it's it speaks to our mission a little bit as well.

[00:26:53]

Like we always we always want people to see what we see and we always want to present everything in in black and white. And in this case, in color. So there is the transparency there that we like to show our our readers.

[00:27:10]

Can we highlight this is for either one of you. And if we can't, then just we won't. But can we highlight any of the people who've contacted us since this to were a little bit maybe not happy about this reporting?

[00:27:24]

Is that some we can't get into?

[00:27:25]

Yeah. No, we can get into that. Yes. You want to talk about the the threat letters that we got?

[00:27:30]

Yeah. So it's interesting who it came from. It came from a man named Shlomo Retch staffing [Erroneous transcription, should read: "Shlomo Rechtschaffen"]. Is that his name? Good. Good. Beautiful. I can't. I don't have you. That's not a hard too hard to pin down like Soriano.

[00:27:46]

But from what we found, he appears to be the head of a group called the French, the U.K. Friends of Bar-Ilan University, which is an Israeli university.

[00:27:56]

And he's appeared in pictures with some pretty, you know, high level Mossad officials and other Israeli officials. But he appears to have a law firm in the United Kingdom. The address that it's registered under is a home, probably his home. And I think it's just him as the lawyer. And we received a letter from him basically telling us that what we're writing about is defamatory and to back off and all that, you know, a typical try trying to intimidate, intimidate us, which didn't happen. And what's interesting to me is that Soriano does have a legitimate lawyer in Israel who's a big shot lawyer over there. We reached out to him for comment and our response was to get a letter from Shlomo again, another letter. And, you know, his letters are they're not good grammar. They do not have good punctuation. They're not even signed by him. If there's a script signing of writing staff and law, which is the name of his supposed law firm. So, you know, I'm not even sure what's really going on there. I'm not sure who Soriano is. Actual lawyer is. I'm not sure if we're going to be sued, but it is there. The intrigue never ends with this guy. And up to the letters that we've got, I just have so many questions.

[00:29:16]

Yeah, I'll get on.

[00:29:18]

Go. I just add on to that real clear course. It's interesting to point out that Shlomo is also involved with. I think just one of Soriano LLC is. Yes. Yes. Yeah. One of the what we think is going to be a real estate LLC. We haven't tracked down anything, anything that it owns right now. But he's one director in in Soriano LLC here and they're the only two directors. So it's tough to say if he's actually Soriano's lawyer or if he's a business partner or what he's doing. And like Jeff said, the other lawyer. Whose whose name escapes me right now. But he's the not Shlomo, the real lawyer in Israel. He's handled all of the Israeli court filings and everything. So he appears to be sorry on [Erroneous transcription, should read "Soriano's"] his real lawyers. So the fact that we're getting this this letter from Shlomo and not not the other guy is interesting, especially because they have a business relationship. So, yeah, it just adds to the intrigue. And it's it's quite a quote, quite a few weeks that we've had forensic news dealing with this.

[00:30:29]

This threat, Shlomo also is pictured and I'm only calling Shlomo because I can't pronounce the last name. I need to write was a rough stuff and that's our best try. OK. He also is if you read the article listeners, he's pictured in the article with a former head of hanging out with a former head of Mossad.

[00:30:49]

Intelligence. that. I'm correct on that, right?

[00:30:54]

That's right. So that was that was interesting. Yeah. I mean, it is just pure speculation here, but it's almost like, does the front man have a front man? That's right.

[00:31:03]

And I'll add to that. Yes. There's another figure who I mentioned before. Name Orly Weinberger, who's also another lawyer, who he is, who Soriano has partnered with on three of his companies. And we can't really figure out a lot about her either. So it does appear that the front man as a front man, because he needs one now that he's coming under such scrutiny.

[00:31:21]

And Weinberger also has her own real estate like legit real estate company. So it's just it's an insane web of connections. And we tried to we tried to write this initial article in a way that's somewhat easy to understand. B33

yeah, we we gave it our best shot. We included a lot of pictures and like an interactive map and everything. But it does take a couple reads to fully understand the gravity of the situation. And going forward, we're going to have a series that we're we're doubling the Walter Soriano files just to to reference the data dump that we got on these these court documents and internal USG contracts and documents. So we're going to break it down going forward into more digestible pieces of information. But there's a lot here. And, you know, a ton of questions that we can't answer so far, but we're gonna get there.

[00:32:19]

I mean, I had. I'm not going to lie. I had to read that article about 10 times. There's so much information in there and it still blows my mind. And then the new one, I can't keep up with this stuff.

[00:32:31]

It's like and that's with us cutting, you know, a fair amount of material that we could have put in. But there's a lot here. But I think I don't want to speak for Jack, but I think one of our main goals here is, of course, we want like the reader to be interested in this and to understand the story and why the Senate's interested. But also, we're kind of writing for an audience of investigators, like we think that this information could possibly be used by the Senate and the House and maybe even the FBI and investigators in the UK and Israel. And that's I don't want to sounds like too. I don't know, like tooting our own horn. But I do think this information that we've uncovered is important in terms of legal proceedings and potential investigations into sorry on [Erroneous transcription, should read "Soriano's"] US businesses.

[00:33:24]

Hundred percent. Yeah. You know, I just keep reflecting on the way, you know, all our lives have really kind of changed since since, you know, the November of 2016, the election. And I just didn't realize people like this. I knew there were shady crooks and things, but I had no idea that there was this underworld. I don't know if you guys did, but you probably did. But I shouldn't.

[00:33:49]

It's it's only going to. There's only got to be more.

[00:33:53]

That's, I can say that for certain. And it's interesting how all these people are connected. It just makes me I don't know. It makes me sort of buy into the the Bernie Sanders shtick of the 1 percent and how all these people at the

very top of the world that have, you know, these billionaires and and multi multimillionaires, they're all connected. And the scary part is that they're connected to the most powerful governments in the world. Now, instead of just business, it really is like an octopus with all these tentacles that Pierce, pierce all these countries in financial business, political and all of the above. You know, it's an interesting web that we're we're trying to untangle here at forensic things.

[00:34:40]

Scott, I want to ask you a question about a part of the article where his I guess at least one of the versions of Soriano is you USG was dissolved in lawsuits after he failed to foil a 30 million dollar diamond robbery. Am I correct?

[00:34:55]

Yeah, that's right. And we're going to have more. Coming out on this soon, it's just more Russians. But but yeah. He is first company, which was called Universal Security Group, which. What? Well, we've pretty much deduced is that it's like USG version 1. So his universe security group was in charge of protecting and providing security for a company called Graft Diamonds, which is a huge diamond company. They have they have store fronts all over the worlds in the U.S. and the UK. He was in charge of providing security for the UK branch. And subsequently in 2009, they had this huge jewelry heist in which more than 40 million euros of jewelry were stolen.

[00:35:48]

And so Soriano was in charge of this.

[00:35:51]

And on the board of that first version of universal security, USG was a bunch of intelligence officials from Israel. And there was one from who led the Belgian intelligence services for almost a decade. They pretty much resigned because of this huge heist.

[00:36:11]

And that was pretty much it for the first iteration of USG like that, that complete failure to protect probably one of their biggest clients. And they ended up losing 30 million dollars, which led to USG folding. And then Soriano kind of rebranded and changed Universe Security Group to USG and kind of tried to restart his business life after this big failure.

[00:36:39]

You know, it's it's fascinating. I mean, this is someone who on one level was trusted by Vladimir Putin to protect the airport. On the other hand, I mean, I have to ask. Maybe it's just the the writer in me. But typically, high dollar, especially jewel robberies, are sort of inside jobs. Is there any chance that he was involved in it?

[00:36:59]

We don't think so. This was this was connected to. And there's actually been like movies and documentaries about this group, the Pink Panther jewelry robberies. I don't know what the proper term is. But this was a legit group of people who who made their living robbing high, high end jewelry stores, the Pink Panthers. So, yeah, we don't we don't think this is an inside job. This was just there's some reports of like the security guard at the time just being being kind of lazy and letting suspicious people into the into the store. So, yeah, this was this was a legit heist and a failure of of USG.

[00:37:38]

I remember that Pink Panther. That's unbelievable.

[00:37:41]

Yeah. These these are the people that robbed the UK store were either a part of that group or were connected to the principles of that group.

[00:37:49]

I'm getting a sense that we might have more information. Either one he was or it sounds like you guys are working on something you're guarding. Anything you could tell us?

[00:37:57]

Yeah. We we know a little bit more about it. I don't want to scoop myself, OK?

[00:38:03]

There's nothing we can say a little bit. We know a little bit more about who and who Soriano hired at the second iteration of USG. And that person has connections to the Graft Diamonds franchise as well.

[00:38:22]

What does either one of you this? His name, Walter's story. Ono's name first appeared on all our radars when it was it was Natasha Bertrand. If I'm correct, who reported that he was wanted by the Senate Intelligence Committee?

for questioning, right? Yeah, that's right. OK. So do we know the names on that list, which was exclusively then published here? Forensic news are names, many names associated with Special Counsel Mueller's investigation. Do we know exactly why the government wants to talk to Walter Soriano?

[00:38:53]

So I'll take this one just real quick. It's interesting because Natasha wrote about this a little bit. Pretty much everyone that we've been able to contact and political is able Politico is able to contact that's on this list has denied ever knowing Soriano or USG.

[00:39:14]

And that certainly could just be them lying or trying to distance themselves. But it is a big open question as to why why Soriano was of interest in the first place to the Senate and what they think his involvement was. But like you said, pretty much every name on the list, with the exception of maybe one or two, was deeply involved in the Mueller probe. So we know it's part of the Senate's Russia investigation into the 2016 election. We don't know why, why or how Soriano came onto the radar, but we can certainly say that the Senate. Just send these requests out of the blue. They had some solid information that Soriano was interested, was interesting to them and was somehow connected to at least a few people on this list.

[00:40:12]

And I'll just add to that, when you put together these Israeli social media groups that were potentially influencing the election on behalf of the Trump campaign. And when you add it to it's a man, Walter Soriano, who appears to be the front man who is dealing who potentially dealing with other people's money and investing in real estate. And then you add to it real estate investments in the United States starting in July of 2016. The potential is just like explosive.

[00:40:41]

And what? And one name that stood out to me and I think you just and I know Natasha, we talked a little bit about this was Christopher Steele. He's he's on the list of people that the Senate wants to know more about in relation to the sorry, I know Steele connection. So I think the implication there is that Soriano may have been a source for Steele and the Steele dossier. I mean, we know that's what Steele was doing in the middle part of 2016. And the letter asks for communications between Soriano and all these people from June 2015 through the election. So we know that's what Steele was doing. He's putting together that dossier during this time. And it's interesting to see Steele and his company, Orbis business included in this list, which led us to believe, you know, we don't don't off confirmation, but it led us to believe that Soriano may have been a source for Steele.

[00:41:49]

That's very interesting. I know in the dossier he occasionally will say a phrase like a Russian quote, like hell. He'll give you a little bit of information on a source. But was there any mention of either of you of a Israeli source or. I don't remember anything like that.

[00:42:05]

Did the dossier doesn't mention. I don't think it mentions Israel at all. But it does it does have like the like you said, those vague sort of descriptions. And one of them or maybe multiple haven't read it in a few months. But he does he does reference business partners of X, Y and Z. So we know Deripaska is pretty much central to the Mueller investigation and his deputy. Kill him neck, who is also on the list.

[00:42:35]

So we know that Soriano is a business partner of their POSCO. We we can prove that based on the contract that we got with Sochi Airport and and other ventures. So he very well could have been one of those business partners referenced in the dossier.

[00:42:55]

And here a forensic news from what I just found out before we take this. You both of you are gonna be we're going to be doing a Walter Soriano, sort of a we're gonna be doing more articles on this and a collection, is that correct?

[00:43:09]

Scott, that elusive. Lawson, how do we. Maybe it's. Oh, man, just I got him.

[Erroneous transcription, should read: "Scott, did I lose it. Lost him. Gee, maybe, oh man Jess, they got him, it's Soriano."]

[00:43:18]

Say, I gotta keep you guys gotta keep going. I think we did lose him.

[00:43:24]

Oh, man.

[00:43:26]

That's good. Yeah, I do. Yeah. Good. Yeah. Well, he's back. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. Oh, man said I was sorry. Good.

[00:43:37]

Yeah. So he's he's pretty much suing everyone that he has contact with. And we certainly we stand with our Israeli friends who who are being sued. And we'll be we'll be sure to mention their reporting and all of our pieces. Yeah. We have we have a ton of data that we're preparing to section off into articles and post a series of vex poses that we're calling the Walter Soriano files.

[00:44:05]

I love. Great. I just just honestly just great. You know, while while the journalism is serious, I also think as someone who came from a just the general entertainment perspective, it's important to present things in a certain way that grabs the reader. And I just. That's a great title, guys.

[00:44:22]

Yeah. And not to shout out real quick and shout out to Savior, our forensic news cohort. He does all the graphics and he's actually helping us research a lot of this and present it in a way that's digestible. And he's responsible for all the images and and how good that website looks and and how easy it is to understand this information. So he's helping a lot with this as well.

[00:44:52]

By the way, for the record, I'm definitely leaving that whole part in where Scott just disappeared.

[00:44:56]

That was just awesome. It was just perfect for this show.

[00:45:02]

Gentlemen, any thing else the public needs to know about Walter Soriano?

[00:45:07]

Anything on your mind? Brianna, I hacked my computer. [Erroneous transcript, should read "Soriano hacked my computer"] He's going in and out. Yeah.

[00:45:15]

Just anything else you want to tell us about this gentleman?

[00:45:19]

Yeah, I think that certainly with Scott's new reporting, the focus that that I'm now looking at is, is this group USG and how the money is coming in, what exactly this group does. And I think we're where we're going to get a lot of interesting information about that group and what they do. And it's going to tell us a lot about who this guy is and his connections to everyone else.

[00:45:39]

Yeah. Perfect. Scott, any any last words?

[00:45:43]

Yeah, we have. We have a lot coming up on Soriano specifically. I think the main point that we're going to try and hammer home here is we're going to follow the money. Like Jeff said, and we're also establishing his deep, deep connections to Netanyahu. And that's something that hasn't been explored too much, at least in the United States press at all. But his connections to Netanyahu run super deep. And we think we know actually that this is going to be a big story in Israel and Netanyahu's going to have to answer about his dealings with Soriano. And if Soriano has ever managed his money or if he's ever been a partner in sorry on those businesses and this is gone, all going to be wrapped up into the Senate's investigation. So we have the top of the Israeli government certainly involved, the top of the Russian government. And now the U.S. is on the case trying to sort it all out.

[00:46:48]

Scott Steadman, just Coleman. And I'll go with Eric Smith for two. It's been great talking to you guys. And look forward to doing this against. And thank you for listening.

[00:47:00]

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6. PUBLICATION 6

First published: 26 July 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/07/26/the-walter-soriano-files-finance-consultant-ties-soriano-to-russian-military-embezzlement-scandal/>

[Inset: photograph of a military drone overlaid with a photograph of the Claimant grieving at a funeral.]

The Walter Soriano files: Finance consultant ties Soriano to Russian military embezzlement scandal

July 26, 2019 1:30 pm

By *Scott Stedman and Jess Coleman*

Walter Soriano TLDR (Too Long Didn't Read):

- *The Senate believes Walter Soriano, a security consultant who has worked for Russian oligarchs and those close to Israeli PM Netanyahu, may have knowledge of the Russian interference in the 2016 US Election.*
- *This report establishes that Soriano employed a Russian businessman whose company received millions from a Russian military drone contract.*
- *The businessman worked as Soriano's finance consultant.*

A finance consultant who worked for USG Security Limited—the company controlled by Walter Soriano—is connected to a Russian military contract and a Russian businessman embroiled in major embezzlement and money laundering investigations, according to public records, reports, and other documents.

As previously reported by Forensic News, Soriano, who has recently sparked the interest of the Senate Intelligence Committee, has deep connections with power-brokers in Israel, the UK and Russia, and is involved in several mysterious business ventures stretching from Russia to the U.S.

Forensic News can now reveal that Walter Soriano's finance consultant for USG Security Limited (his main business) was a Russian man intimately connected to potential financial crimes in Russia and the UK. The accountant, Maxim Skachko, listed on at least two professional networking websites his employment with USG

Security. A cached Google search confirms that Skachko listed USG Security as his employer on his LinkedIn page, but the reference has since been scrubbed from his current profile.

[Inset: screenshot of Google search result for Maxim Skachko's LinkedIn profile]

Though the timeline of his employment with USG is unclear, it is certain that Skachko joined the company after the name changed from Universe Security Group to USG Security in 2010.

Not much is known about Skachko, but his LinkedIn indicates that he currently works for an LED and LCD screen production and integration company, along with a London-based financial services group. Partners in his various ventures regularly include Russians and Ukrainians, though nearly all of his business interests are located in London.

According to public records, Skachko in December 2015 became director of EK Group Ltd., a company registered in the UK. Prior to Skachko's appointment, the company's sole director was Elsina Khayrova, the daughter of the Russian politician Rinat Khaivor and husband of Russian businessman Dmitry Tsvetkov. The shareholder of the company since 2011 has been Hegir Capital Management, a company incorporated in Belize. Belize is known for its corporate secrecy laws, thus information on the company is limited.

Skachko also served as the director of another U.K. company, Hegir Properties Ltd from 2013-2018. Like EK Group, Hegir Properties was owned by Hegir Capital, the Belize company, and lists the same London address. Hegir Properties was dissolved in May 2019 and was under the control of Tsvetkov.

Tsvetkov, a multi-millionaire who describes himself as self-employed, identified Skachko as his personal assistant, according to a statement given to the police in Cyprus by one of Tsvetkov's business partners in a different case:

I made a total of 10 payments, including 9 payments directly to Dmitry Tsvetkov and one payment of 16/2/2016 in the amount of 30,000 pounds sterling to the company, which Dmitry Tsvetkov pointed out to me, saying that I have to pay and that it belonged to a certain Max Skachko – the person he wanted to use in London to get information. Subsequently, I learned that Max Skachko was Dmitry Tsvetkov's personal accountant...

Recently, Tsvetkov became a target of an investigation in Russia involving the embezzlement of nearly half a billion rubles. According to Russian media reports, the money was granted by the Russian government to Alexander Gomzin, head of the Kazan Scientific and Production Association, in order to develop drone technology. Part of the money, however, was taken offshore and deposited in the UK company Hegir Advisory Limited—also known as EK Group.

Records show that Hegir Advisory did indeed see a huge influx of cash from 2012 to 2013 and from 2013 to 2014. From 2007-2010, Khayrova's father, United Russia's Rinat Khairov was an advisor to the Russian Defense Minister. This has caused intense speculation in foreign media reports because a company controlled by Khairov's daughter Elsina Khayrova, received millions from the drone contract.

[Inset: partial screenshots of two abbreviated balance sheets as at 28 February 2013 and 28 February 2014 respectively for (a) Hegir Advisory Limited; and (b) EK Group (UK) Limited]

Gozmin was arrested by Russian authorities in 2018 for embezzling approximately \$15M of the funds. Tsvetkov and Skachko have faced no charges and aren't officially accused of any crimes. The relationship between Gomzin and Tsvetkov remains unclear. Lawyers for Skachko and Soriano did not respond to requests for comment. Tsvetkov could not be reached.

Hours after Forensic News sent requests for comment to people close to Tsvetkov including Walter Soriano's lawyers, multiple changes were made to the UK company that received part of the Russian drone money. Skachko was removed as director, the company name changed from EK Group to DT Advisory, and Tsvetkov certified that he was the beneficial owner.

[Inset: partial screenshots of Companies House documents in relation to (a) a notice of individual person with significant control in respect of Mr Dimtry Tsvetkov; and (b) a notice of termination of a director appointment in respect of Mr Maxim Skachko.]

Inset: four photographs of named individuals with large overlaid text (line breaks indicated by /): (a) photograph of the Claimant overlaid with the text "WANTED BY THE SENATE FOR QUESTIONING IN REGARDS TO RUSSIA PROBE / CLOSE TO THE INNER CIRCLE OF BENJAMIN NETANYAHU / WORKED FOR MULTIPLE RUSSIAN OLIGARCHS / WALTER SORIANO"; (b) photograph of Maxim Skachko overlaid with the text "SORIANO'S USB SECURITY'S FINANCE CONSULTANT / DIRECTOR FOR COMPANY THAT RECEIVED MILLIONS FROM RUSSIAN MILITARY DRONE CONTRACT / PERSONAL ACCOUNTANT OF RUSSIAN BUSINESSMAN DMITRY TSVETKOV AND HIS WIFE ELSINA KHAYROVA / MAXIM SKACHKO"; (c) photograph of Dmitry Tsvetkov overlaid with the text "CONTROLLED MULTIPLE COMPANIES IN WHICH SKACHKO WORKED / CONNECTED TO RUSSIAN MAFIA MEMBERS / INVESTOR IN GRAFF DIAMONDS WHERE SORIANO'S USG WAS HIRED TO PROVIDE SECURITY / DMITRY TSVETKOV"; (d) photograph of Elsina Khayrova overlaid with the text "DAUGHTER OF RUSSIAN POLITICIAN IN PUTIN'S PARTY / CONTROLLED COMPANY THAT RECEIVED MONEY FROM RUSSIAN MILITARY DRONE CONTRACT / MARRIED TO BUSINESSMAN DMITRY TSVETKOV".

Khayrova made headlines in 2017 with the purchase of a Surrey mansion for 20 million pounds, and a London apartment for 10 million pounds. Both purchases were financed by EFG Private Bank, which was fined 4.2 million pounds in 2013 for failing to combat money-laundering.

Tsvetkov is also embroiled in another scandal that includes alleged Russian mafia figures. The businessman opened a franchise of Graff Diamonds in Cyprus alongside other two other Russian investors who have been fingered as Russian organized crime figures. Tsvetkov and the CEO of Graff Diamonds dined with the President of Cyprus at the event celebrating the opening of the store. The deal soon turned sour and ended up in a multimillion-dollar lawsuit.

As previously reported, Soriano's USG Security was hired to provide security for Graff Diamonds in London in the late 2000s. Soriano's family friend, controversial illusionist Uri Geller, received 10% of the proceeds from the USG-Graff partnership. There is no indication that Soriano knows Tsvetkov or was involved in the Cyprus branch of Graff Diamonds, though of course Soriano did employ Tsvetkov's personal accountant.

Following the publication of this article, Dmitry Tsvetkov emailed Forensic News stating, among other things, that he has "never met with Mr Walter Soriano and I never spoke to him and communicated with him, either directly, or indirectly; moreover, I had absolutely no knowledge, whatsoever and howsoever, about Mr Maxim Skachko' previous engagements (if any) with Mr Walter Soriano and/or with Mr Walter Soriano' companies."

Walter Soriano's own ties to Russian oligarchs have come under intense scrutiny. As Forensic News previously reported, Soriano's company, USG Security, was hired to provide security services to the Sochi airport during the 2014 Olympics. Investigations by French and Israeli media sources have also found that Dmitry Rybolovlev hired Soriano in mid-2016 and Roman Abramovich hired Soriano sometime before that. Soriano is said to be especially close to Oleg Deripaska.

The Senate Intelligence Committee asked Soriano to provide all his communications with several key Russians at the heart of the Mueller probe—including Oleg Deripaska and his aide Konstantin Kilimnik—as part of its request for an interview. That Soriano's former financial consultant was in business with a Russian accused of serious financial crimes is likely to further intrigue investigators.

Note: A previous version of this article stated that Skachko became "co-director" of EK Group when he was appointed in 2015. In fact, Skachko became the sole director. A previous version of this article also stated that Khairov was an advisor to the Russian Defense Minister after 2010. His advisory role ended in 2010.

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7. PUBLICATION 7

First published: 1 August 2019

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2019/08/01/the-walter-soriano-files-once-claimed-close-relationship-with-steve-wynn/>

[Inset: photograph of the Claimant grieving at a funeral overlaid with a photograph of Steve Wynn]

The Walter Soriano files: Once claimed “close relationship” with Steve Wynn

August 1, 2019 7:17 pm

By **Scott Stedman**

The shadowy private intelligence/security consultant wanted for questioning by the Senate Intelligence Committee in their Russia probe, Walter Soriano, once claimed to have worked for Donald Trump’s friend and former RNC finance chairman Steve Wynn.

American billionaire Ruth Parasol, who hired the consultant Walter Soriano in the late 2000s to navigate a DoJ investigation into her company, swore under oath in 2012 that Soriano told her that he had a “close relationship” with Wynn.

[Inset: photograph of legal document with the text “22.7 He had been engaged to perform security and business services by certain American celebrities and business figures, including casino magnate Steve Wynn, with whom Claimant claimed to have a close relationship” the alt-text is “Walter Soriano once said he had a “close relationship” with Steve Wynn”.]

As previously reported by Forensic News, Parasol paid Soriano over \$30,000,000 from 2009 until 2011 for multiple tasks. Soriano was hired to “resolving the DoJ issue”, “assisting Ms. Parasol... in relation to the PartyGaming business” and “investigating PartyGaming’s competitors.” PartyGaming was Parasol’s online gambling company.

Read the full declaration by Ruth Parasol in Israeli court in 2012:

[Inset: document reader displaying the full Defence and Counterclaim in *Walter Soriano v Ruth Parasol Deleon* (2012 Folio 781).]

Forensic News could not independently verify that Wynn had a close relationship with Walter Soriano. Lawyers for Soriano and representatives for Wynn Resorts did not respond to requests for comment. Parasol directed Forensic News to her lawyer (allegedly hand-picked by Soriano as claimed in the above lawsuit) who declined to comment.

An archived version of Soriano's USG Security's website shows that the company offered hotel security protection.

"Hotel Security Designed for the prevention, and implementation of:

- *Violent Attacks – including Terrorism*
- *Public Order Disturbances*
- *Theft or Loss of Hotel Property*
- *Theft or Loss of Guests' Possessions*
- *Minimal disruption to day-to-day running of the hotel*
- *Improvement & transparency to customer service*
- *Comprehensive risk assessment and security survey*
- *On-site Training for Security Officers & Staff*
- *Security engineering during hotel construction or renovation to integrate security means into the structure*
- *Internal investigations into theft, fraud etc.*
- *Ongoing support, including consulting according to need, drills and surprise inspection of hotel security staff*"

Before becoming close friends in the late 2000s, Trump and Wynn were fierce corporate competitors. In fact, in lawsuits in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Trump accused Wynn of using a private investigator to dig up dirt on Trump and the Trump Organization. The investigator, Louis Rodriguez, was working for Trump, and allegedly turned double agent.

[R]epresentatives of Wynn and Trump engaged in a nasty behind-the-scenes battle that generated allegations of fraud, money-laundering, perjury, conspiracy, and the theft of trade secrets.

The two real estate and casino magnates traded accusations of using spies, blackmail, and surreptitious recordings in order to gain dirt on each other. The two settled outside of court in 2000, and by 2011, Trump attended Wynn's wedding.

Wynn, who had previously donated to Democrats and Republicans, rose to political prominence in 2016 when he heaped praise upon Trump. After the election, Wynn was handpicked to be a Vice Chair of the Trump inauguration and later tapped by Trump personally to become the Republican National Committee finance chairman. A year

later, Wynn resigned from the post after numerous women came forward sharing experiences of Wynn's sexual assault.

The connection between Steve Wynn and Walter Soriano is sure to pique the interest of investigators in the Senate Intelligence Committee and federal investigators.

The Senate suspects that Soriano may have knowledge of Russian election interference in 2016, due in part to his longstanding business and personal relationship with Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

This article will be updated as more information is learned.

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8. PUBLICATION 8

First published: 16 June 2020

URL: <https://forensicnews.net/2020/06/16/israeli-spy-companies-show-critical-link-between-flynn-deripaska-and-senate-intelligence-committee-target-walter-soriano/>

[Inset: photograph of the Claimant and Oleg Deripaska with a shadowy web emanating from behind the Claimant.]

Israeli Spy Companies Show Critical Link Between Flynn, Deripaska, and Senate Intelligence Committee Target Walter Soriano

June 16, 2020 12:24 pm

By **Scott Stedman** and **Robert J. DeNault**

Walter Soriano, a target of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation into foreign election interference in 2016, appears to be a key middle-man connecting a network of Israeli hacking and surveillance firms to Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska and former Trump National Security Adviser, Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn.

Under the umbrella of technology conglomerate NSO Group, two business entities appear critical to understanding the relationship between Soriano, Russian oligarchs, and Flynn. OSY Technologies and Circles.

Soriano's connections to those firms deepen a mystery around the former Israeli intelligence officer and raise questions about American government officials who may have been involved with his activities.

Documents reviewed by Forensic News show that OSY Technologies is currently engaged in a contract with a law firm known for its work for the sanctioned oligarch, Deripaska. Sources familiar with the matter say the law firm is standing in for Deripaska in the contract, and report that the work related to the engagement involves Circles, the OSY subsidiary hacking firm. These details generate concern about American individuals who have contracted with OSY Technologies, NSO Group, and the related firms.

One of the American officials involved in this web is Lt. Gen. Flynn, the former National Security Advisor to President Donald Trump who was convicted of lying to the FBI at the onset of the Trump Administration. Public financial disclosures show that Flynn advised OSY Technologies from mid-2016 to January 2017. OSY Technologies (sometimes a stand-in name for the NSO Group conglomerate) is primarily a consortium of cyber-spy companies run by former Israeli intelligence officers. It is funded in significant part by enormous loans, at least one of which was issued by the bank Credit Suisse.

Several of Flynn's aides and associates also work with other firms connected to Soriano. The Trump Department of Justice is controversially moving to drop Flynn's guilty plea, an effort that has been met with skepticism by career prosecutors and the federal judge overseeing the case. Some uncharged conduct relating to Flynn's work for Turkey appeared in his guilty plea as a representation of the Government's leniency toward Flynn, but none of that information related to his work for Israeli-based intelligence companies.

The other company, a Bulgarian and Cyprus-based hacking and surveillance firm called Circles, is also an offshoot in the NSO Group corporate family. Its ties to Soriano run through his personal lawyer and his longtime business partner, demonstrated by filings related to the firm.

Circles has quietly been selling its services to governments around the world. It offers robust hacking and surveillance capabilities. Their software can be used to penetrate phones, read text messages, listen in on live phone calls, and track any user, all at a client's request. As an NSO Group affiliate, Circles has tethered itself to malign actors, like the Saudi government, who have used its services to spy on private citizens, including journalists and political opponents. NSO Group is currently under criminal investigation by the FBI.

Now, Forensic News can reveal that Circles' direct parent company, OSY Technologies—the firm for which Flynn worked—is actively contracted to work for Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska. Deripaska is notably an associate of Paul Manafort who was personally sanctioned by the US in 2018 for his proximity to the Kremlin after its invasion of Ukraine in 2014. Sanctions on his major companies, however, were removed by the Trump Administration in 2019.

Circles, OSY Technologies, and NSO Group aren't the only Israeli intelligence companies with unexplained ties to Trump campaign officials and Russian oligarchs. Other Israeli firms, including data analytics and social media manipulation firms such as Psy Group, reportedly offered the Trump Presidential campaign election assistance in 2016. That company is under criminal investigation in California regarding an election influence operation that was conducted on behalf of a local businessman.

Sources tell Forensic News that Psy Group was also contracted to work for Deripaska and another Russian oligarch, Dmitry Rybolovlev. Soriano has also reportedly worked for both men. These connections emerge as U.S. investigators have focused on whether these Israeli intelligence companies operated as intermediaries for alleged coordination between the Trump Campaign and Russia.

The Senate Intelligence Committee has for over a year attempted to interview Soriano regarding potential foreign election assistance offered to the 2016 Trump presidential campaign. His connections to the Israeli intelligence firms, discovered through a maze of public and private documents compiled by Forensic News, suggest Soriano is more deeply involved in entities connected to Deripaska than previously understood.

The Committee sought information from Soriano to explain those connections and other activities related to the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. In recent weeks, Forensic News has spoken to multiple sources who indicate Soriano and Deripaska have a closer relationship than what has been publicly reported, and that the Committee's interest in Soriano was not a mere coincidence.

The sources—who provided details to supplement public documents and existing reporting—paint a picture positioning Walter Soriano at the center of a large, international web connecting hackers and private spies to Russian oligarchs, high-profile Israelis, and Trump administration officials.

Walter Soriano

[Inset: photograph of the Claimant.]

Exclusive image of Walter Soriano

Soriano is a businessman and former Israeli military intelligence officer. The Senate Intelligence Committee, which recently submitted its report on foreign interference in the 2016 election for a declassification review by the intelligence community, sent a letter to Soriano's London address in 2019 asking for any and all communications he had with Deripaska and other figures.

The letter requested information about correspondences between Soriano and Deripaska's associates, Israeli private intelligence companies like Psy Group and Black Cube, Michael Flynn, and other Trump-world figures.

Forensic News acquired the letter sent to Soriano, seen below:

[Inset: photograph of partially redacted two-page letter addressed to the Claimant from Richard Burr and Mark R. Warner. Three names in the letter are annotated: (a) Oleg Deripaska with “*Soriano partnered with Deripaska’s Basic Element in 2014 to secure the Sochi Airport for the Olympics / Annotated by Scott Stedman*”; (b) Georgy Oganov with “*Sources tell Forensic News that Oganov is an intermediary between Soriano and Oleg Deripaska.*” / *Annotated by Scott Stedman*”; and (c) Michael Flynn with “*a former senior aide to Flynn, Richard Frankel, began working for Soriano’s USG Security in January 2016*”]

In February, Soriano told the Telegraph that he never received the letter. But, according to sources, Soriano did receive it, and thought it was a fake. Forensic News understands that Soriano instructed his Washington-based attorney to contact the Senate Intelligence Committee in order to find out whether the document was authentic. The Committee affirmed that it was and that they were serious about pursuing their investigation and his testimony.

The Telegraph article reports Soriano’s lawyers called the Senate to discuss the letter’s contents just days after it was sent. “The bi-partisan committee of US senators remains keen to interview Mr. Soriano,” the publication noted.

Soriano operates behind the scenes and actively avoids appearing in photographs, sources say, but his client list is eye-popping. Through another company he personally owns and manages called USG Security, he has worked for a number of Russian government-connected entities and oligarchs including Deripaska, Dmitry Rybolovlev, and Roman Abramovich.

Soriano’s circle in Israel is perhaps even more elite than in Russia. He is reportedly close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and allegedly surveilled members of the police force who were investigating the Prime Minister for corruption, a charge that ended in an indictment for the embattled Israeli leader. Soriano unequivocally denies those allegations.

Other Israeli associates of Soriano include Netanyahu’s close confidants, Isaac Molho and Ari Harow. Harow served as Netanyahu’s Chief of Staff before he was convicted of fraud and breach of trust.

Soriano never responded to the Senate letter.

The 2020 Firms: FloLive & Circles

Forensic News reported in April on deep ties between FloLive, a London-based IT “connectivity and security” company, and Circles, a spyware affiliate of NSO Group. NSO Group is an Israeli spyware firm that has sold surveillance software to Arab and Western countries which have then spied on dissidents allegedly including Jamal Khashoggi. FloLive and Circles shared principal shareholders and employees. At one point, both companies were owned by the same offshore corporate entity.

The two founders of Circles, Boaz Goldman and Nadia Ropleva, are now leaders at FloLive. That move is striking, as the missions for the two companies couldn’t be more divergent. Circles develops tools to hack and surveil; FloLive is involved in cybersecurity and connectivity. FloLive explicitly claims it offers protection against the exact type of hacking that Circles exploits, an intrusion referred to as “SS7” hacking.

Numerous employees from Circles have made the jump to FloLive, and vice-versa. FloLive even posted a picture on their Facebook page showing employees playing a game of soccer with staff from Circles.

But publicly, the two firms have not acknowledged any official ties.

What worries security experts is the nature of the divergent work. As FloLive works with clients in the U.K. and elsewhere to set up “connectivity protections,” it could be acting as a front group for hackers at Circles to have better access to those same networks. The more clients FloLive is responsible for protecting against cyberattacks, the more information could be passed to Circles in furtherance of its hacking efforts in Europe and around the world.

Now, Forensic News can reveal that two associates of Walter Soriano have ownership stakes in the London company, FloLive. Soriano, a close ally of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his family and a security operative who has worked for multiple Russian oligarchs, has reportedly kept distance between himself and operations to which he oversees.

Documents from the United Kingdom show that Walter Soriano’s personal lawyer, Shlomo Rechtschaffen, as well as Soriano’s business partner, Doron Cohen, are both shareholders of FloLive. Rechtschaffen and Cohen also work for Soriano’s real estate business in London. Cohen separately partnered with Soriano in another real estate venture in Florida.

In a statement to Forensic News, Rechtschaffen denied that Soriano himself was affiliated in any way with FloLive, saying, “clients of my firm are not related to one another. As a matter of fact, Mr. Soriano had never heard the name Flo or any of the other names mentioned below, prior to your email. As to Mr. Doron Cohen, as a matter of

fact, he did acquire the shares mentioned below, long before any engagement with Mr. Soriano, which was prior to his meeting Soriano."

But Mr. Rechtschaffen's statement regarding Soriano and Cohen appears demonstrably false. According to incorporation documents filed with the state of Florida, Soriano partnered with Cohen in their Florida business venture in July 2016. That was months before Cohen obtained his shares in FloLive in December 2016, making the assertion that Cohen acquired his stake in FloLive before meeting Soriano impossible.

Note: Walter Soriano via Rechtschaffen has previously threatened to sue Forensic News, stating, 'We see no alternative left but to issue proceedings. We put you on notice that we will rely on any further publications or articles as seriously aggravating the damage caused by the original Article and will invite the Court to increase the award for libel to reflect the malicious and calculated nature of your campaign against our client.' To date, no lawsuit has been initiated.

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[Inset: button with the text "Become a patron"]

The UK documents below indicate that Soriano's connections to the hacking and surveillance firm Circles run deeper than publicly known.

[Inset: partial screenshots of two documents for companies with the company numbers 09931232 and 10178976]

FloLive shareholders include Flo Holdings [Under first image.]

Flo Holdings shareholders include Doron Cohen and Shlomo Rechtschaffen, two Soriano confidants. [Under second image]

Perhaps unintentionally, Rechtschaffen confirmed that FloLive has "involvement" with Circles. "I am Mr. Soriano's lawyer and not his business partner, as wrongly stated by you... I have also provided legal advice for another client of mine, a company of the Flo Group (not the one mentioned in your email), long before their involvement with Circles," he said.

He denied that Soriano had anything do with FloLive or Circles and didn't explain why legal advice to a company would result in the lawyer receiving a large shareholder status in the firm.

[Inset: flowchart showing the Claimant and his connections to FloLive. Graph links the Claimant to Shlomo Rechtschaffen and Doron Cohen, who are linked to FloLive, which is further linked to Circles.]

Michael Flynn and Walter Soriano

Soriano's connections to Circles via his lawyer and business partner are of critical importance. Gen. Michael Flynn worked for the parent company of Circles, OSY Technologies, in 2016 and 2017. As previously mentioned, the Senate Intelligence Committee sought communications between Soriano and Flynn. Flynn was forced to resign as National Security Adviser and pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his conversations with the Russian Ambassador.

OSY Technologies is managed by the directors of NSO Group, some of who are former members of the elite Israeli military signals intelligence, identified as Unit 8200. Circles is directly owned by OSY Technologies, according to documents acquired from Cyprus.

Another intriguing connection between Flynn and Soriano is Richard Frankel, a former U.S. intelligence official who left his position in the federal government to join Soriano's private security firm USG Security in early 2016.

Frankel was a senior aide to Michael Flynn. One news report by ABC News—where Frankel is now a contributor—described Frankel as a “friend” of Flynn’s. It’s unclear if Frankel still works for USG Security, though a January 2017 book on cybersecurity listed Frankel as a “Managing Director” for that Soriano company (p. 15).

Frankel did not respond to a list of detailed questions. It is unclear whether Frankel’s departure from the U.S. intel community to join Soriano’s operation—around the same time Flynn began advising the Trump 2016 campaign and OSY Technologies and the same time Soriano’s USG began work for Rybolovlev—is related to the Senate Intelligence Committee’s request for communications between Soriano and Flynn.

Other connections between former Flynn aides and work they may have completed for Circles are also being explored. A spokesperson for the Senate Intelligence Committee did not respond when asked about the status of their investigation into Walter Soriano. Sidney Powell, an attorney for Michael Flynn, did not respond to questions about Flynn’s work for OSY Technologies.

Rechtschaffen denied that Soriano has ever had a relationship with Flynn stating, ‘Walter Soriano has never met, had not and does not have, any relationship whatsoever (directly or indirectly) with Mr. Flynn, hence no messages directly or indirectly have been required or ever passed.’”

Walter Soriano & Oleg Deripaska

Walter Soriano has associated with Deripaska for a number of years. Forensic News reported in 2019 that Soriano was hired by Deripaska’s company, Basic Element, to provide security for the 2014 Olympics at the airport in Sochi, Russia. The contract stipulated that Soriano’s USG Security had “direct control” of operations at the Sochi airport, which is majority-owned by Basic Element.

Parts of a subcontract for the Sochi deal reveal strict stipulations regarding Soriano and Deripaska, as seen below.

[Inset: partial screenshot of two clauses of contract.]

The subcontractors were to represent themselves as USG Security workers and mention Walter Soriano’s name to any Russian authorities

[Inset: partial screenshot of clause of contract.]

The subcontract demands that the subcontractor not divert business from Deripaska and another major USG Security (Walter Soriano’s firm) client

Deripaska continues to contract with Israeli security firms for secretive work.

Forensic News has exclusively reviewed an invoice paid to OSY Technologies from a Moscow-based law firm known for its work for Deripaska and the Russian government. The invoice cited work the intelligence company, OSY Technologies, completed as recently as 2019, but began in early 2018. Sources involved with the matter told Forensic News that the law firm is a stand-in for Deripaska and there are indications in the invoice that the work began earlier than 2018.

The invoice shows that a project was paid for by the law firm, Egorov Puginsky Afanasiev & Partners (EPAP or EPAM in Russian). The document—on OSY Technologies letterhead—stated that funds were to be paid to a bank account at UniCredit Bulbank in Bulgaria controlled by OSY Technologies – the NSO Group offshoot. Included in the documents were bank account numbers for OSY Technologies.

Forensic News understands that the payment was for services completed by OSY Technologies' subsidiary backing company, the Bulgaria-based Circles, though the name Circles does not appear on the documents.

The invoices were sent to the head of the law firm's Moscow branch, Elena Kuznetsova. A LinkedIn profile for Kuznetsova shows that she previously worked for Deripaska's aluminum company, Rusal. The founder of the law firm, Dmitry Afanasiev, has worked for Deripaska's companies for at least 14 years and even held a coveted position on the board of Rusal before stepping down when U.S. officials demanded Deripaska's allies cede control of the company in exchange for lifting sanctions.

Forensic News is currently unable to publish the document, as the sources who provided the invoice feared that they could be in danger if it were released to the public. In a series of emails, Tom Clare, an American attorney representing Deripaska, flatly denied that his client has ever hired OSY Technologies or Circles, and rejected the claim that Deripaska has any relationship with the principals of Circles or that the Russian oligarch worked with Walter Soriano in any capacity after the 2014 Sochi Airport deal.

EPAP, the Moscow-based law firm, is also a close partner of the Russian state and has even worked for Russian President Vladimir Putin in an individual capacity. Nikolai Egorov, one of the name-sake founders of the firm, was classmates with Putin at Leningrad State University in the 1970s. He later went on to teach and was a professor to Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Mendvedev.

The other name-sake founder, Stanislav Puginsky, was handpicked by convicted Russian agent Maria Butina and her handler Alexander Torshin to attend the 2017 National Prayer Breakfast, chaired by newly-minted President Trump. Butina was recently deported to Russia after serving prison time on espionage-lite charges.

EPAP has been a successful endeavor for Egorov, and a deep-dive into the law firm by Law.com in 2007 stated that it acts as "a regular adviser to Putin's government."

But the firm's U.S. ties raise more questions about connections between Trump associates and Deripaska. Records show EPAP's U.S. branch represented Deripaska in a joint effort with Trump attorney Marc Kasowitz in a U.S. lawsuit filed by one of Deripaska's companies. Kasowitz represented Trump in his personal capacity during the Mueller Investigation and has reportedly represented Trump and his businesses for decades. The shared representation of Deripaska and Trump made headlines in mid-2017.

Most remarkable about the contract between EPAP and OSY Technologies is that it puts Gen. Michael Flynn squarely in the middle of multiple figures that are still of interest to investigators. As mentioned, Flynn worked for OSY Technologies through January 2017. The agreement seen by Forensic News between EPAP and OSY Technologies began in 2018, though the full nature of the relationship is unknown.

[Inset: flowchart showing connections to Deripaska, Flynn, and OSY Technologies.]

Neither the Mueller Report nor any other public investigative report has detailed Flynn's payment from foreign firms that also receive money from Deripaska. While Flynn's plea agreement involved admissions that he conducted foreign work for Turkey in violation of laws about lobbying disclosure, the document made no reference to Flynn's work with Israeli technology firms—a curious omission, especially in light of further revelations that Mueller examined whether George Papadopoulos (a Trump campaign foreign policy advisor) was an unregistered agent of Israel.

Flynn is not the only name with tenuous connections to Deripaska and Trump advisers. Georgiy Oganov, one of the aides who sources told us briefs Deripaska on information obtained by Circles and OSY Technologies, was mentioned in the Mueller Report. The Special Counsel documented a January 2017 meeting in Spain between Oganov and former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort.

Another thread tying the three together: Manafort, Deripaska, and Oganov were all caught up in a controversy about recordings made by a Russian escort, Nastya Rybka, in 2016. Forensic News has learned that Walter Soriano may have been involved in that controversy as well.

Soriano, Oganov & Deripaska's Mistress

[Inset: photograph of Deripaska and Nastya Rybka.]

Nastya Rybka and Oleg Deripaska

Courtesy: New Europe

Rybka, a Belarusian escort and self-described "sex coach" who had a relationship with Deripaska, claimed in 2018 to have audiotapes showing coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia after her monthslong affair with Deripaska in mid-2016 and early 2017.

She was arrested in Thailand in 2018 after she famously published a video taken in August 2016 of Deripaska discussing U.S. relations on a yacht with the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Sergei Prikhodko. The woman

claimed to have other video and audio recordings connecting Deripaska to Paul Manafort, and allegedly recorded Deripaska discussing election interference activities.

During the Mueller probe, the FBI unsuccessfully sought to speak with Rybka. She was later extradited back to Russia, where she was forced to publicly apologize to Deripaska at the Moscow airport.

An Intelligence Online report in late 2019 stated that Walter Soriano was involved in the Rybka affair at the behest of Deripaska, aiding in Deripaska's effort to obtain the sensitive materials possessed by Rybka. Two sources familiar with this episode confirmed that Soriano was indeed involved, directly or indirectly, in attempting to silence Rybka. Rechtschaffen denied these claims.

Russian agents told Rybka to keep quiet about Deripaska, and the other audiotapes she claimed to have in her possession have never been published. Social media posts indicate that Rybka now resides in Moscow and runs an "online school for seduction." Reached by Forensic News via the messaging app WhatsApp, Rybka declined to comment on anything political, stating that she would only speak about her commercial activities.

Russian opposition leader Alex Navalny revealed more of Rybka's audio in 2019. Recordings make clear that Deripaska's associates—including Georgiy Oganov—plotted the arrest of Rybka. "What we are interested in is that these people be kept in jail," Oganov can be heard saying to an unknown lawyer named William.

Given Oganov's reported service as Deripaska's intermediary to Soriano and the inclusion of his name in both the Mueller Report and the Senate's letter to Soriano, his discussion of silencing Rybka adds credence to allegations Soriano was involved in Rybka's plight.

[Inset: audio clip, nine seconds long, stating "And what we're interested in is that these people be kept in jail and then we see that they stand trial then be sentenced to the relevant terms."]

The US government has since determined that Oganov is a critical intermediary for Deripaska. As noted above, Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election detailed a meeting between Paul Manafort and Oganov. The meeting took place in January 2017, after Russian efforts to interfere on Trump's behalf had been revealed. The European connection was initially denied by Manafort, but U.S. investigators were not convinced.

Mueller reported that the men were slated to discuss “recreating the old friendship” between Deripaska and Manafort at the January meeting, which allegedly took place in Madrid. That Manafort was willing to meet with Oganov after his own expulsion from the Trump campaign as well as recently-published allegations of improper ties between Trump and Russia suggests Oganov was a person of critical importance to Manafort. The meeting was also arranged by Konstantin Kilimnik, an alleged Russian agent who acted as a go-between for Manafort and Deripaska during the campaign season:

[Inset: partial screenshot of pages 141 and 142 of the Mueller report.]

Allegations that Oganov is both a critical intermediary between Deripaska and Manafort and Deripaska and Israeli intelligence firms have significant consequences. Manafort’s transmission of voter and polling data to alleged GRU-agent Kilimnik in 2016 looks more compelling in light of this new information. Mueller’s team was unable to determine (V. 1, p. 131) what happened to the polling data after Manafort gave it to Kilimnik.

It is notable that the Senate Intelligence Committee, led by Republican Chairman Richard Burr and Democratic Ranking Member Mark Warner, requested information from Soriano on his communications with many of these individuals. The Committee finalized the last section of its investigation into foreign interference in the 2016 Presidential Election just weeks ago, as Burr was forced to step down amidst allegations of insider trading.

The final section was submitted for declassification review on Burr’s last day in his role as Committee Chair. The Republican-led Committee has been known for its quiet, bipartisan work throughout the Trump Administration: its Republican majority notably issued a subpoena to Donald Trump, Jr. in June 2018, despite fierce opposition from President Trump.

The final section of the report, reportedly approximately 1000 pages, is said to detail a counterintelligence investigation conducted into the Trump Campaign’s connections with foreign actors. Such an investigation may be more extensive than the criminal investigation conducted by Robert Mueller, as counterintelligence investigations typically have a wider scope than criminal ones.

The Senate Intelligence Committee Report is slated to be released publicly—with redactions—in the coming weeks.

When asked whether Walter Soriano features in the upcoming report, both Senators Burr and Warner declined to comment.

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9. PUBLICATION 9

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Poor Walter Soriano Beset by “Dark, Hidden Forces”

January 30, 2020 by Richard Silverstein

ההבטאות נדירה של איש העסקים היהודי-בריטי וולטר סורייאנו: אני סובל מזיק היקפי מהקמפיין נגד נתנו. לטענו, נזק בידי כוחות אפלים נסתרים

Walter Soriano is the ultra-Orthodox international fixer who's worked for everyone from soccer great, Maradona to Russian oligarch, Oleg Deripaska. He's been an arms dealer, he's been the muscle to collect debts for Russian oligarch football club owner, Dimitri Rybolovlev. He's bought off a Russian sex worker who threatened to release an audio tape of her cuddles with Deripaska. He's Bibi's favorite bully according to an Israeli TV news report. Yet he remained a Man of Mystery, till today.

The Telegraph published a puff piece on Soriano which offered him free reign in conveying the heartache of being Walter Soriano. In it, he accuses the many “dark forces” arrayed against him of a broad conspiracy to take him down. Luckily, he doesn't offer any coherent theory of why his enemies are after him: no anti-Semitic or anti-Israel cabals. Or if he did offer, they're not in the profile.

Despite the “poor pitiful me” act, Soriano is not a good guy. He works for corrupt oligarchs and prime ministers. He sells weapons at steep profit to failed states. He hires Israeli former military hackers to spy on his clients' enemies. Yet none of that was in the article. But despite all this, the report was very helpful, since Soriano has never spoken publicly and never had his picture published.

There are a number of curious claims the Anglo-Argentine-Israeli makes. He was invited by the Senate Intelligence Committee to testify before it about any connections he might have to Trump confidants Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort or the consultant behind the Trump dossier, Christopher Steele. As Soriano was a secondary figure in its investigation, the Senate didn't pursue him. And he clearly didn't respond. But the reason he offered is bizarre:

To add to the mystery, he insists he has never received the letter and only heard of its existence through news reports.

Believe me, the U.S. Senate knows how to reach potential witnesses. It doesn't invite them via journalists. The letter was sent to his London business address. As for 'receiving' it, he's parsing that the way Bill Clinton tried to parse the word "is." The letter certainly reached his office. Whether he physically received it into his hands may be another matter.

The Telegraph notes that the subject of its profile has sued Twitter for being a willing participant in the auto dafe against him:

Mr Soriano has begun a legal action against Twitter in an attempt to stop "false and malicious" allegations being posted online. Tweets, say his lawyers, falsely claim that "our client is a Russian and Israeli 'double agent' and a 'fixer' for Russian oligarchs".

Candid Soriano pics (Forensic News)

Most of the tweets he's complaining about were posted by Forensic News, which offered some juicy reporting about him, and by me. I RTed its articles. Both of us received notices from Twitter that a third-party had complained about them. But the social media platform refused to remove them (it is far more amendable to censoring tweets when a government official demands such action). And there they remain for all to see.

However, no journalist has ever posted on Twitter that he is a "Russian and Israeli 'double agent!'" He doesn't have to be. In fact, it would probably limit his earning potential. As for accusing him of being a "fixer" for oligarchs, he is and I did call him that.

Soriano complains that his dark days began:

...When 'unfounded rumours' were aired almost two years ago on Israeli radio accusing him of being behind the surveillance of police officers investigating Mr Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister.

Mr Soriano told The Telegraph: "The unfounded rumours raised... were completely false and delusional."

The first report was actually not on radio, but on TV (as I recall). It said he'd orchestrated a campaign to spy on Israeli police investigating Netanyahu for corruption. What's curious about this is that while he has sued many people, including me, who opined on this news report, he hasn't sued the TV news channel which aired the original

piece. In fact, it's still available online. Despite this, he's sued Raviv Drucker, 7th Eye, an ultra-Orthodox publication, and myself, all of whom referred to this original report.

To hear Soriano tell it, he's a private man who wants nothing more than to sit back in his rocking chair and dandle his grandchildren on his knee. But some very bad people have it out for him:

There are certain dark forces acting against me trying to relate me with things I have nothing to do with and they don't hide it. Their claims are beyond the sublime, pathetic and ridiculous."

He insisted that he had "zero political business connections and particularly not in Israel". He added: "Historically I have kept myself out of politics or the public domain.

It's hard for me to understand how selling helicopters to Georgia at a steep profit while allegedly paying off the defense minister, who later fled the country after being charged with corruption, is not political.

For those of you wondering how an Israeli security consultant becomes the manager for Diego Maradona, that's interesting to learn:

Mr Soriano...was an amateur footballer in Argentina who met Maradona, probably the world's greatest ever player, through another Argentinian Claudio Caniggia.

Here is the final piece of self-pity that Soriano offers his journalist-Boswell:

Mr Soriano said he has now spent a small fortune trying to defend his reputation and has turned his anger on social media companies. He alleged: "I am a victim of the misuse of the media in order to defame somebody – in this case myself – serving dark and hidden forces, where you don't have even the right even to defend yourself."

Keep in mind that these myriad of lawsuits were launched by him against journalists doing their job. No one came after him and sued him, forcing him to hire high-priced lawyers. He brought all this on himself. Also, all of his efforts to remove any information about him online have actually served the opposite purpose. Whereas he was anonymous until a few years ago, now media outlets around the world have profiled him and his more unsavory activities. In this digital age, you can't lock the barn after the horses have escaped. It's just too late. And the harder you try to do it, the more people wonder what you're trying to hide.

Wikipedia notice that it intends to delete Soriano's article unless editors vote to retain it.

One final irony: if you're someone of any reasonable level of distinction or notoriety there is a Wikipedia article about you. Some are good. Some not so good. But it's exceedingly rare for any subject of such articles to attempt to force the takedown of their own profile. Soriano is trying to do precisely that in Hebrew Wikipedia. According to the Discussion page, his lawyer sent a letter demanding the article be removed. Though editors at Hebrew Wikipedia are exceedingly deferential to the security services and people like Soriano with an intelligence background, I'm happy to say only one editor voted for removal. So the article is here to stay. For some reason, there is no English-language Wikipedia article on Soriano. Wiki-editors, get busy!

The most comprehensive accounting of Soriano's complex web of intrigue is at Forensic News.

Tagged With: bibi netanyahu, censorship, corruption, oligarchs, press freedom, russia, spying, walter soriano

10. PUBLICATION 10

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Walter Soriano: Bibi's Bully and Fixer for Putin's Favorite Oligarch

February 14, 2020 by Richard Silverstein

[Inset: two photographs of the Claimant.]

Walter Soriano

מידע חדש על הקשרים בין וולטר סורייאנו (המקורב לנשיאו) לבין האוליגרך הרוסי המקורב לפיטין

The U.S. has placed Oleg Deripaska under sanctions for his connections to the Russian underworld and his role in sabotaging the 2016 election. He, in turn, has filed an appeal against the decree. Today, the federal government revealed some of the evidence it used to substantiate its claims against the oligarch. It has a substantial body of evidence, some of which cannot be revealed in order not to compromise intelligence sources.

But among the information that was revealed was a charge that Deripaska essentially serves as Putin's money launderer.

Deripaska was in 2016 "reportedly identified as one of the individuals holding assets and laundering funds on behalf of Russian President Vladimir Putin".

... "In or before July 2011, Deripaska's business activity was reportedly used, on at least one occasion, as a cover to facilitate the transfer of funds for the personal use of then Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin," Ofac also says.

[Inset: photograph of Vladimir Putin and Oleg Deripaska.]

Putin sharing secrets with his favorite oligarch, Deripaska

Since clearly Putin wants to hide his assets and ensure they are not traceable to him, he uses an elaborate network of companies and business partners to obfuscate the origin of his holdings. One interesting aspect of this was the

claim that Putin's coziest oligarch pals each had to pony up billions in order to finance the Sochi Olympic Games. Deripaska himself "invested" \$800-million for a share of the new airport that was built, along with other infrastructure.

What's relevant here is that Deripaska's fixer, Israeli security consultant, Walter Soriano, secured the security contract for the Sochi Airport:

...Based on the contract cited in official Russian court filings...Soriano's USG Security had "direct control" of the Sochi International Airport during Putin's crown jewel – the Olympic Games.

The latter claims he was granted the deal because of his extensive experience in the field of providing security for major clients. In truth, he was granted the contract as a piggy feeding from Deripaska's trough:

"This is a quite an unusual situation with a foreigner like Soriano in Sochi," Ilya Zaslavskij, head of Underminers.info, a research project on post-Soviet kleptocracy in the West, told Forensic News. "It suggests that Soriano and his firm possessed some knowledge and/or technology to survey other foreigners and/or Russians that the Russian state could not get otherwise."

"It also suggests very close links of Soriano with the Russian state and Deripaska as they don't let random people in such sensitive spheres," Zaslavskij said.

Anders Aslund, a Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council...told Forensic News that there was a massive payoff to those close to Putin surrounding the Sochi Olympics. He also suggested that Soriano may have had the Kremlin's blessing, given the importance of the Olympics.

After the Telegraph published the first-ever profile of Soriano a few weeks ago, it published a follow-up today. In the original interview, Soriano falsely claimed that he knew nothing of a summons from the Senate Intelligence Committee asking him to testify about his dealing with a number of individuals connected to the Russian election sabotage. Today's report confirms via a senior Committee source that Soriano's lawyers had been directly in touch with the Senate about his testimony. It's not surprising that Soriano would lie. He does it routinely.

Unfortunately, it doesn't appear the Senate is terribly eager to hear Soriano as the source quoted said it would not pursue him further as a witness. Though it did say the invitation remains active and they do wish to hear from him. That should happen sometime before the end of the next Ice Age.

My interest in Soriano stems from a lawsuit he filed against me after I reported about an Israeli TV news segment which said that Soriano had been hired to spy on Israeli police investigating Netanyahu for corruption. The lawsuit was dismissed and the Supreme Court denied his appeal to reinstate it. He paid \$2,500 in attorney's fees to me. It appears that he's not only Deripaska's fixer, but Bibi's as well. Soriano has remaining outstanding lawsuits against TV news reporter Raviv Drucker, 7th Eye, and Twitter (for publishing tweets by me and Forensic News revealing his dealings with Deripaska).

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